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THE

GOSPEL

ITS OWN

WITNESS:

OR, THE

HOLY NATURE and DIVINE HARMONY,

OF THE

CHRISTIAN RELIGION,

CONTRASTED WITH THE

IMMORALITY AND ABSURDITY

OF

DEISM.

BY ANDREW FULLER.

Laying his Hand on the Bible, he would say, "There is true philosophy. This is the wisdom that speaks to the heart. A bad life is the only grand objection to this Book. EARL OF ROCHESTER.

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PREFACE.

THE *ſtruggle between religion and irreligion has exiſted in the world in all ages: and if there be two oppoſite intereſts which divide its inhabitants, the kingdom of Satan, and the kingdom of God, it is reaſonable to expect that the conteſt will continue till one of them be exterminated. The peaceful nature of Chriſtianity does not require that we ſhould make peace with its adverſaries, or ceaſe to repel their attacks, or even that we ſhould act merely on the defenſive: On the contrary, we are required to make uſe of thoſe weapons of the divine warfare with which we are furniſhed for the pulling down of ſtrong holds, caſting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itſelf againſt the knowledge of God, and bringeth into captivity every thought to the obedience of Chriſt.*

The oppoſition of the preſent age has not been confined to the leſs important points of Chriſtianity, nor even to its firſt principles: Chriſtianity itſelf is treated as impoſture. The ſame things, it is true, have been frequently advanced, and as frequently repelled, in former ages; but the adverſaries of the goſpel of late, encouraged, it ſhould ſeem, by the temper of the times, have renewed the attack with redoubled vigor. One of their moſt popular writers, hoping to avail himſelf of this circumſtance, is pleaſed to entitle his performance The Age of Reaſon. *This writer is aware that flattery is*

one of the moſt ſucceſsful means of gaining admiſſion to the human mind; ſuch a compliment, therefore, to the preſent Age, was, doubtleſs, conſidered as a maſter-ſtroke of policy. Nor is Mr. Paine *leſs obliging to himſelf than to his readers, but takes it for granted that the cauſe for which he pleads is that of reaſon and truh. The conſiderate reader, however, may remark, that thoſe writers who are not aſhamed to beg the queſtion in the title page, are ſeldom the moſt liberal or impartial in the execution of the work.*

One thing which has contributed to the advantage of Infidelity is, the height to which political diſputes have ariſen, and the degree in which they have intereſted the paſſions and prejudices of mankind. Thoſe who favor the ſentiments of a ſet of men in one thing, will be in danger of thinking favorably of them in others; at leaſt they will not be apt to view them in ſo bad a light as if they had been advanced by perſons of different ſentiments in other things as well as in religion. It is true there may be nothing more friendly to infidelity in the nature *of one political ſyſtem than another, nothing that can juſtify profeſſing Chriſtians in accuſing one another, merely on account of a difference of this kind, of favoring the intereſts of atheiſm and irreligion: nevertheleſs it becomes thoſe who think favorably of the political principles of infidels, to take heed leſt they be inſenſibly drawn away to think lightly of religion. All the nations of the earth, and all the diſputes on the beſt or worſt mode of go-*

vernment, compared with this, are leſs than nothing and vanity.

To this it may be added, that the eagerneſs with which men engage in political diſputes, take which ſide they may, is unfavorable to a zealous adherence to the goſpel.—Any mere worldly object, if it become the principal thing which occupies our thoughts and affections, will weaken our attachment to religion: and if once we become cool and indifferent to this, we are in the high road to infidelity.—There are caſes no doubt relating to civil government, in which it is our duty to act, and that with firmneſs: but to make ſuch things the chief object of our attention, or the principal topic of our converſation, is both ſinful and injurious. Many a promiſing character in the religious world has by theſe things been utterly ruined.

The writer of the following pages is not induced to offer them to the public eye from an apprehenſion that the Church of Chriſt is in danger. *Neither the downfall of Popery, nor the triumph of infidels, as though they had hereby overturned Chriſtianity, have ever been to him the cauſe of a moment's uneaſineſs.—If Chriſtianity be of God as he verily believes it to be, they cannot overthrow it.—He muſt be poſſeſſed of but* little faith *who can tremble, though in a ſtorm, for the ſafety of the veſſel which contains his Lord and Maſter. There would be one argument leſs for the divinity of the Scriptures, if the ſame powers which gave exiſtence to the Anti-Chriſtian dominion had*

not been employed in taking it away. But tho' truth has nothing to fear, it does not follow that its friends ſhould be inactive. The Lord confers an honor upon his ſervants in condeſcending to make uſe of their humble efforts in preſerving and promoting his intereſt in the world. If the preſent attempt may be thus accepted and honored by* HIM *to whoſe name it is humbly dedicated, the writer will receive a rich reward.*

KETTERING,
October 10, 1799.

* The powers of Europe, ſignified by the Ten Horns, or Kings, into which the Roman empire ſhould be divided, were to give their kingdoms to the Beaſt. They did ſo; and France particularly took the lead. The ſame powers, it is predicted, ſhall hate the Whore, and burn her fleſh with fire. They have begun to do ſo; and in this buſineſs alſo France has taken the lead. Rev. xvii. 12, 13, 16, 17, 18.

Introduction.

THE controverſies between believers and unbelievers are confined to a narrower ground than thoſe of profeſſed believers with one another. Scripture teſtimony, any farther than as it bears the character of truth, and approves itſelf to the conſcience, or is produced for the purpoſe of explaining the nature of genuine Chriſtianity, is here out of the queſtion. *Reaſon* is the common ground on which they muſt meet to decide their conteſts. On this ground Chriſtian writers have ſucceſsfully cloſed with their antagoniſts: ſo much ſo, that of late ages, notwithſtanding all their boaſt of reaſon, not one in ten of them can be kept to the fair and honorable uſe of this weapon. On the contrary, they are driven to ſubſtitute dark inſinuation, low wit, profane ridicule, and groſs abuſe. Such were the weapons of *Shaftesbury*, *Tindal*, *Morgan*, *Bolingbroke*. *Voltaire*, *Hume*, and *Gibbon*; and ſuch are the weapons of the author of *The Age of Reaſon*. Amongſt various well-written performances in anſwer to their ſeveral productions, the reader may ſee a conciſe and able refutation of the greater part of them in *Leland's Review of the Deiſtical writers*.

It is not my deſign to go over the various

topics uſually diſcuſſed in this controverſy, but to ſelect a ſingle one, which I conceive has not been ſo fully attended to but that it may yet be conſidered with advantage. The *internal evidence* which Chriſtianity poſſeſſes, particularly in reſpect to its holy nature, and divine harmony, will be the ſubject of the preſent inquiry.

Mr. Paine, after the example of many others, endeavours to diſcredit the Scriptures by repreſenting the number of hands through which they have paſſed, and the uncertainty of the hiſtorical evidence by which they are ſupported. "It is a matter "altogether of uncertainty to us, he ſays, "whether ſuch of the writings as now "appear under the names of the Old and "New Teſtament, are in the ſame ſtate in "which thoſe collectors ſay they found "them; or whether they added, altered, "abridged, or dreſſed them up."* It is a good work which many writers have undertaken, to prove the validity of the Chriſtian hiſtory; and to ſhow that we have as good evidence for the truth of the great facts which it relates as we have for the truth of any ancient events† whatever. But if in addition to this it can be proved that the Scriptures contain internal characteriſtics of divinity, or that they carry in them the evidence of their authenticity,

* *Age of Reaſon*, Part I. p. 10, 11.
† *Lardner*, *Simpſon*, and others.

this will at once anſwer all objections from the ſuppoſed uncertainty of hiſtorical evidence.

Hiſtorians inform us of a certain valuable medicine, called *Mithridate*, an antidote to poiſon, and which is ſtill in reputation. It is ſaid to have been "Invented by "Mithridates, king of Pontus; that the "receipt of it was found in a cabinet, "written with his own hand, and was "carried to Rome by Pompey; that it was "tranſlated into verſe by Democrates, a "famous phyſician; and that it was after-"wards tranſlated by Galen, from whom "we have it."† A modern caviller might take it into his head to object to the authenticity of this hiſtory; he might alledge that the preparation has paſſed through ſo many hands, and that there is ſo much hear-ſay and uncertainty attending it, that no dependance can be placed upon it, and that it had better be rejected from our Materia Medica. But of what account would ſuch an objection be in the eſtimation of mankind? They would aſk, *Has it not been tried, and found to be effectual; and that in a great variety of inſtances?* Such are Mr. Paine's objections to the Bible; and ſuch is the anſwer that may be given him.

This language is not confined to infidel writers. Mr. Locke ſpeaks of what he

† *Chambers's Dict.* Mithridate.

calls "Traditional Revelation," or Revelation as we have it, in ſuch a manner as to convey the idea, that we have no evidence of the Scriptures being the word of God, but from a ſucceſſion of witneſſes having told us ſo.* But I conceive theſe ſacred writings may contain ſuch internal evidence of their being what they profeſs to be, as that it might with equal reaſon be doubted whether the world was created by the power of God, as whether they were written by the inſpiration of his Spirit: and if ſo, our dependence is not upon mere tradition.

It is true, the ſcriptures having been conveyed to us through the medium of man, the work muſt neceſſarily in ſome reſpects have been humanized; yet there may be ſufficient marks of divinity upon it to render it evident to every candid mind that it is of God.

We may call the Moſaic account of the Creation, a tradition, and may be ſaid to know through this medium that the heavens and the earth are the productions of divine power. But it is not through this medium only that we know it: The heavens and the earth carry in them evident marks of their divine original. Theſe works of the Almighty ſpeak for themſelves; and in language which none but thoſe who are willfully deaf can miſunderſtand. *Their*

* *Human Und.* B. IV. Chap. xviii.

ſound is gone forth throughout all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. Were any man to pretend that its being a matter of Revelation, and to us merely traditional Revelation, that God made the heavens and the earth, and therefore that a degree of uncertainty muſt neceſſarily attend it; he would be reminded that the thing itſelf carried in it its own evidence. Let it be candidly conſidered whether the ſame may not be ſaid of the Holy Scriptures. They will *admit* of hiſtorical defence; but they do not require it. Their contents, come through whoſe hands they may, prove them to be of God. It was on this principle that the goſpel was proclaimed in the form of a *teſtimony*. The primitive preachers were not required by him who ſent them to prove their doctrine in the manner that philoſophers were wont to eſtabliſh a propoſition; but to *declare the counſel of God*, and leave it. In delivering their meſſage, they *commended themſelves to every man's conſcience, in the ſight of God.*

It is no objection to this ſtatement of things that the Scriptures are not embraced by every man, whatever be the diſpoſition of his mind. This is a property that no divine production whatever poſſeſſes; and to require it is equally unreaſonable as to inſiſt that for a book to be perfectly legible it muſt be capable of being read by thoſe who ſhut their eyes upon it. Mr. Paine holds up the advantages of the book of

nature in order to diſparage that of Scripture, and informs us that "No deiſt can "doubt whether the works of nature be "God's works." An admirable proof this that we have arrived at The age of reaſon! Can no *Atheiſt* doubt it? I might as well ſay, no Chriſtian doubts the truth of the Scriptures: the one proves juſt as much as the other. A prejudiced mind diſcerns nothing of divine beauty either in nature or Scripture; yet each may include the moſt indubitable evidence of being wrought by the finger of God.

If Chriſtianity can be proved to be a religion that inſpires the love of God and man, yea and the only religion in the world that does ſo; if it endues the mind of him that embraces it with a principle of juſtice, meekneſs, chaſtity, and goodneſs, and even gives a tone to the morals of ſociety at large, it will then appear to carry its evidence along with it The effects which it produces will be its letters of recommendation; written *not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of ſtone, but in fleſhly tables of the heart.*——Moreover, If Chriſtianity can be proved to be in harmony with itſelf, correſpondent with obſervation and experience, and conſiſtent with the cleareſt dictates of ſober reaſon, it will further appear to carry in it its own evidence: Come through whoſe hands it may, it will evince itſelf to be what it profeſſes to be, a religion from God.

I will only add in this place, that the Chriſtianity here defended is not Chriſtianity as it is corrupted by popiſh ſuperſtition, lowered by philoſophical ingenuity, or as interwoven with national eſtabliſhments, for the accompliſhment of ſecular purpoſes; but as it is taught in the New Teſtament, and practiſed by ſincere Chriſtians. There is no doubt but that in many inſtances Chriſtianity has been adopted by worldly men, even by infidels themſelves, for the purpoſes of promoting their political deſigns. Finding the bulk of the people inclined to the Chriſtian religion under ſome particular form, and attached to certain leading perſons amongſt them who ſuſtained the character of teachers; they have conſidered it as a piece of good policy to give this religion an eſtabliſhment, and theſe teachers a ſhare in the government. It is thus that religion, to its great diſhonour, has been converted into an engine of ſtate. The politician may be pleaſed with his ſucceſs, and the teacher with his honours, and even the people be ſo far miſled as to love to have it ſo; but the miſchief reſulting from it to religion is incalculable. Even where ſuch eſtabliſhments have ariſen from piety, they have not failed to corrupt the minds of Chriſtians from the ſimplicity which is in Chriſt. It was by theſe means that the church at an early period, from being the bride of Chriſt, gradually degenerated to a harlot, and in the end became the mother

of harlots, and abominations of the earth. The good that is done in ſuch communities is not in conſequence of their peculiar eccleſiaſtical conſtitution, but in ſpite of it: it ariſes from the virtue of individuals which operates notwithſtanding the diſadvantages of their ſituation.

Theſe are the things that afford a handle to unbelievers. They ſeldom chuſe to attack Chriſtianity as it is drawn in the ſacred writings, and exemplified in the lives of real chriſtians, who ſtand at a diſtance from worldly parade, political ſtruggles, or ſtate intrigues; but as it is corrupted and abuſed by worldly men. Mr. Paine racks his imagination to make out a reſemblance betwixt the heathen mythology and Chriſtianity. While he is going over the ground of Chriſtianity as inſtituted by Chriſt and his apoſtles, the reſemblance is faint indeed. There are only two points in which he even pretends to find an agreement; and theſe are formed by his miſrepreſenting the ſcriptures. The heathen deities were ſaid to be *celeſtially begotten*; and Chriſt is called *the Son of God*.* The heathens had a *plurality* of deities, even twenty or thirty thouſand; and Chriſtianity has reduced them to three! It is eaſy to ſee that this is ground not ſuited to Mr. Paine's purpoſe: he there-

* To give a colour to this ſtatement, he is obliged to affirm that *only gentiles believed Jeſus to be the Son of God*. What a palpable falſhood!

fore haſtens to corrupted Chriſtianity; and here he finds plenty of materials. "The "ſtatue of Mary, he ſays, ſucceeded the "ſtatue of Diana of Epheſus. The deifi- "cation of heroes changed into the canoni- "zation of ſaints. The mythologiſts had "gods for every thing. The Chriſtian my- "thologiſts had ſaints for every thing. The "Church became as crowded with the one, "as the Pantheon had with the other, and "Rome was the place of both."* Very true, Mr. Paine; but you are not ſo ignorant as to miſtake this for Chriſtianity. Had you been born and educated in Italy, or Spain, you might have been excuſed in calling this "The Chriſtian theory;" but to write in this manner with your advantages, is diſingenuous. Such conduct would have diſgraced any cauſe but yours. It is capable however of ſome improvement. It teaches us to defend nothing but the truth as it is in Jeſus. It alſo affords preſumptive evidence in its favor; for if Chriſtianity itſelf were falſe, there is little doubt but that you, or ſome of your fellow-labourers, would be able to prove it ſo; and this would turn greatly to your account. Your neglecting this, and directing your artillery chiefly againſt its corruptions and abuſes, betrays a conſciouſneſs that the thing itſelf is, if not invulnerable, yet not ſo eaſy of attack. If Chriſtianity had really been a relic of hea-

* *Age of Reaſon*, Part I. p. 5.

theniſm, as you ſuggeſt, there is little reaſon to think that you would have ſo ſtrenuouſly oppoſed it.

The Goſpel its own Witneſs:

&c. &c.

PART I.

IN WHICH THE HOLY NATURE OF THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION IS CONTRASTED WITH THE IMMORALITY OF DEISM.

THE greateſt enemies of Chriſtianity would ſtill be thought friendly to morality, and will plead for it as neceſſary to the well-being of mankind. However immoral men may be in their practice, and to whatever lengths they may proceed in extenuating public vices; yet they cannot plead for immorality in the groſs. A ſober, upright, humble, chaſte, and generous character is allowed on all hands to be preferable to one that is profligate, treacherous, proud, unchaſte, or cruel. Such indeed is the ſenſe which men poſſeſs of right and wrong, that whenever they attempt to diſparage the former, or vindicate the latter, they are reduced to the neceſſity of covering each with a falſe diſguiſe. They cannot traduce good *as good*, or juſtify evil *as evil*. The love of God muſt be called *fanaticiſm*, and benevolence to men, *methodiſm*, or ſome ſuch opprobious name, before they can run them down. Theft, cruelty, and murder,

on the other hand, muſt aſſume the name of *wiſdom* and *good policy*, ere a plea can be ſet up in their defence. Thus were the arguments for the abolition of the Slave-trade anſwered, and in this manner was that iniquitous traffic defended in the Britiſh Parliament. Doubtleſs there is a *woe* hanging over the heads of thoſe men who thus *called evil good, and good evil*; nevertheleſs we ſee even in their conduct the amiableneſs of righteouſneſs, and the impoſſibility of fairly oppoſing it.

CHAP. I.

Chriſtianity reveals a God. glorious in holineſs: but Deiſm, though it acknowledges a God, yet denies or overlooks his moral character.

THERE are certain perfections which all who acknowledge a God, agree in attributing to him: ſuch are thoſe of wiſdom, power, immutability, &c. Theſe by Chriſtian divines are uſually termed his *natural* perfections. There are others which no leſs evidently belong to deity, ſuch as goodneſs, juſtice, veracity, &c. all which may be expreſſed in one word, *holineſs*; and theſe are uſually termed his *moral* perfections. Both natural and moral attributes tend to diſplay the glory of the divine character, but eſpecially the latter. Wiſdom and power in the Supreme Being ren-

der him a proper object of admiration ; but juſtice, veracity, and goodneſs attract our love. No being is beloved for his greatneſs, but for his goodneſs, Moral excellence is the higheſt glory of any intelligent being, created or uncreated. Without this, wiſdom would be ſubtilty, power tyranny, and immutability the ſame thing as being unchangeably wicked.

We account it the glory of Revelation, that while it diſplays the natural perfections of God in a way ſuperior to any thing that has been called religion, it exhibits his moral excellencies in a manner peculiar to itſelf. It was with good reaſon that Moſes affirmed in behalf of Iſrael, *Their rock is not as our Rock, our enemies themſelves being judges.* The God or Rock of Iſrael is conſtantly deſcribed as a Being glorious in holineſs, and as requiring pure and holy worſhip, *The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-ſuffering, and abundant in goodneſs and in truth—The Lord our God is holy—Holy and reverend is his name—Glory ye in his holy name—And one cried to another, and ſaid, Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Hoſts ; the whole earth is full of his glory—He is of purer eyes than to behold evil ; and cannot look on iniquity—A God of truth, and without iniquity ; juſt and right is he.* Is any thing like this to be found in the writings of the ancient heathens? No. The generality of their deities were the patrons of vice, and their worſhip was accompanied

with the foulest abominations that could disgrace the nature of man. Justice, benevolence, and veracity were not considered as necessary in any part of their religion; and a large proportion of it consisted in drunkenness, lewdness, and the offering up of human sacrifices.

The object of Christian adoration is JEHOVAH, the God of Israel; whose character for holiness, justice, and goodness is displayed in the doctrines and precepts of the gospel in a more affecting light than by any of the preceding dispensations. But who or what is the God of deists? It is true they have been shamed out of the polytheism of the heathens. They have reduced their thirty thousand deities into one: but what is his character? What attributes do they ascribe to him? For any thing that appears in their writings, he is as far from the holy, the just, and the good, as those of their heathen predecessors. They enjoy a pleasure, it is allowed, in contemplating the productions of wisdom and power: but as to holiness, it is foreign from their enquiries: A holy God does not appear to be suited to their wishes.

Lord *Bolingbroke* acknowledges a God, but is for reducing all his attributes to *wisdom* and *power*; blaming divines for distinguishing between his physical and moral attributes; asserting that "we cannot ascribe "goodness and justice to God, according to "our ideas of them, nor argue with any

"certainty about them; and that it is abſurd "to deduce moral obligations from the mo- "ral attributes of God, or to pretend to "imitate him in thoſe attributes."*

Voltaire admits "a ſupreme, eternal, incomprehenſible intelligence;" but paſſes over his moral character.†

Mr. *Paine* ſays, "I believe in one God, and no more;"‡ and in the courſe of his work aſcribes to him the natural perfections of *wiſdom* and *power*; but is very ſparing in what he ſays of his moral excellence, of his being the moral governor of the world, and of man's being an accountable creature. He affects indeed to be ſhocked at the impurity of the ideas and expreſſions of the Bible, and to feel for "the honor of his Creator, in having ſuch a book called after his name."§ This is the only paſſage that I recollect, in which he expreſſes any concern for the moral character of God; and whether this would have appeared, but for the ſake of giving an edge to reproach, let the reader judge.

How are we to account for theſe writers thus denying or overlooking the moral character of the Deity, but by ſuppoſing that a *holy* God is not ſuited to their inclinations? If we bear a ſincere regard to moral excellence, we ſhall regard every being in

* See Leland's *Review*, Let. xxiii.
† *Ignor. Philos.* Nos. xv, xvi, xviii.
‡ Age of Reaſon, Part I. p. 1.
§ Ibid, p. 16.

proportion as he appears to poſſeſs it; and if we conſider the Divine Being as poſſeſſing it ſupremely, and as the ſource of it to all other beings, it will be natural for us to love him with ſupreme affection, and all other beings in ſubſerviency to him. And if we love him ſupremely on account of his moral character, it will be no leſs natural to take pleaſure in contemplating him under that character.

On the other hand if we be enemies to moral excellence, it will render every being who poſſeſſes it unlovely in our eyes. Virtuous or holy characters may indeed command our *reſpect* and even *admiration*; but will not attract our *affection*. Whatever regard we may bear to them, it will not be on account of their virtue, but of other qualities of which they may be poſſeſſed. Virtuous characters may be alſo wiſe and mighty; and we may admire their ingenuity, be delighted with their ſplendor, and take pleaſure in viſiting them that we may inſpect their curioſities: but in ſuch caſes the more things of a moral nature are kept at a diſtance, the more agreeable will be our viſit. Much the ſame may be ſaid of the Supreme Being. If we be enemies to moral excellence, God, as a holy Being, will poſſeſs no lovelineſs in our eyes. We may admire him with that kind of admiration which is paid to a great genius, and may feel a pleaſure in tracing the grandeur and ingenuity of his operations: but the farther

his moral character is kept out of ſight, the more agreeable it will be to us.

Lord *Shafteſbury*, not contented with overlooking attempts to ſatirize the ſcripture repreſentations of the divine character. "One would think, he ſays, it were eaſy to "underſtand that provocation and offence, "anger, revenge, jealouſy in point of ho-"nour or power, love of fame, glory, and "the like, belong only to limited beings, "and are neceſſarily excluded a Being "which is perfect and univerſal."* That many things are attributed to the divine Being in a figurative ſtyle, ſpeaking merely after the manner of men, and that they are ſo underſtood by Chriſtians, Lord Shaftesbury muſt have well known. We do not think it lawful, however, ſo to explain away theſe expreſſions as to conſider the Great Supreme as incapable of being offended with ſin and ſinners, as deſtitute of pleaſure or diſpleaſure, or as unconcerned about his own glory, the exerciſe of which involves the general good of the univerſe. A Being of this deſcription would be neither loved nor feared, but would become the object of univerſal contempt.

It is no part of the imperfection of our nature that we are ſuſceptible of provocation and offence, of anger, of jealouſy, and of a juſt regard to our own honour. Lord Shafteſbury himſelf would have ridiculed

* *Characteriſtics*, Vol. I. § V.

the man, and ſtill more the magiſtrate that ſhould have been incapable of theſe properties on certain occaſions. They are planted in our nature by the Divine Being, and are adapted to anſwer valuable purpoſes. If they be perverted and abuſed to ſordid ends, which is too frequently the caſe, this does not alter their nature, or leſſen their utility. What would Lord Shafteſbury have thought of a magiſtrate, who ſhould have witneſſed a train of aſſaſſinations and murders without being in the leaſt *offended* at them, or *angry* with the perpetrators, or inclined to take *vengeance* on them for the public good?—What would he think of a Britiſh Houſe of Commons who ſhould exerciſe no *jealouſy* over the encroachments of a miniſter, or of a king of Great-Britain who ſhould ſuffer, with perfect indifference, his juſt authority to be treated with contempt?

But we are *limited* beings, and are therefore in danger of having our juſt rights invaded. True; and though God be unlimited, and ſo in no danger of being deprived of his eſſential glory, yet he may loſe his juſt authority *in the eſteem of creatures;* and were this to take place univerſally, the whole creation would be a ſcene of anarchy and miſery. But we underſtand Lord Shafteſbury. He wiſhes to compliment his Maker out of all his moral excellencies. He has no objection to a God, provided he be one after his own heart; one who ſhall pay no ſuch regard to human affairs as to call men to ac-

count for their ungodly deeds. If he thought the Creator of the world to bear ſuch a character, it is no wonder that he ſhould ſpeak of him with what he calls "good humour, or pleaſantry."* In ſpeaking of ſuch a God, he can, as Mr. *Hume* expreſſes it, "feel more at eaſe" than if he conceived of him as he is characterized in the Holy Scriptures. But let men beware how they play with ſuch ſubjects. Their conceptions do not alter the nature of God; and however they ſuffer themſelves to trifle now, they may find, in the end, that there is not only a GOD, but *a God that judgeth in the earth.*

CHAP. II.

Chriſtianity teaches us to acknowledge God, and to devote ourſelves to his ſervice: but Deiſm, though it confeſſes one ſupreme Being, yet refuſes to worſhip him.

IF there be a God, he ought to be worſhipped. This is a principal which no man will be able to eradicate from his boſom; or even to ſuppreſs, but at great labour and expenſe. The Scriptures, it is well known, both inculcate and inſpire the worſhip of God.—Their language is, *O, come let us ſing unto the Lord: let us make a joyful noiſe to the Rock of our ſalvation. Let us come before his*

* *Characteriſtics*, Vol. I. § III.

preſence with thankſgiving, and make a joyful noiſe unto him with pſalms—O come, let us worſhip and bow down: let us kneel before the Lord our maker.—Give unto the Lord glory and ſtrength: give unto the Lord the glory due to his name. Bring an offering, and come into his courts.—O worſhip the Lord in the beauty of holineſs: fear before him all the earth.—Give thanks unto the Lord call upon his name; make known his deeds among the people—glory ye in his holy name; let the heart of them rejoice that ſeek the Lord. Seek the Lord, and his ſtrength; ſeek his face continually.

The *ſpirit* alſo which the Scriptures inſpire is favorable to divine worſhip. The grand leſſon which they teach is *love;* and love to God delights to expreſs itſelf in acts of obedience, adoration, ſupplication, and praiſe. The natural language of a heart well affected to God, is—*I will call upon him as long as I live—Bleſs the Lord, O my ſoul; and all that is within me bleſs his holy name. —Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer, and ſupplication, with thankſgiving, let your requeſts be made known unto God.*

Is it thus with our adverſaries?—They ſpeak indeed of "true and fabulous theology," and of "true and falſe religion;" and often talk of "adoring" the Supreme Being. But if there be no true religion amongſt Chriſtians, where are we to look for it?—Surely not amongſt deiſts. Their "adorations" ſeem to be a kind of exerciſes much

reſembling the benevolent acts of certain perſons, who are ſo extremely averſe to oſtentation, that nobody knows of their being charitable but themſelves.

Mr. *Paine* profeſſes to "believe in the equality of man, and that religious duties conſiſt in *doing juſtice, loving mercy, and*"—and what? I thought to be ſure, he had been going to add, *walking humbly with God.* But I was miſtaken. Mr. Paine ſupplies the place of walking humbly with God, by adding, "and endeavouring to make our fellow-creatures happy."* Some people would have thought that this was included in *doing juſtice, and loving mercy:* but Mr. *Paine* had rather uſe words without meaning, than write in favour of godlineſs. *Walking humbly with God* is not comprehended in the liſt of his "religious duties." The very phraſe offends him. It is that to him, in quoting ſcripture, which a non-conductor is to the electrical fluid: it cauſes him to fly off in an oblique direction; and, rather than ſay any thing on ſo offenſive a ſubject, to deal in unmeaning tautology.

Mr. *Paine* not only avoids the mention of *walking humbly with God*, but attempts to load the practice itſelf with the foulеſt abuſe.† He does not conſider himſelf as "an out-caſt, a beggar, or a worm;" he does not approach his Maker through a Mediator; he conſiders "Redemption as a fable," and

* *Age of Reaſon*, Part I. p. 2.
† Age of Reaſon, Part I. p. 21.

himſelf as ſtanding in an honourable ſituation with regard to his relation to the Deity. Some of this may be true; but not the whole. The latter part is only a piece of religious gaſconade. If Mr. Paine really thinks ſo well of his ſituation as he pretends, the belief of an hereafter would not render him "the ſlave of terror."† But allowing the whole to be true, it proves nothing. A high conceit of one's ſelf is no proof of excellence. If he chuſe to reſt upon this foundation, he muſt abide the conſequence: but he had better have forborne to calumniate others. What is it that has tranſported this child of reaſon into a paroxyſm of fury againſt devout people? By what ſpirit is he inſpired in pouring forth ſuch a torrent of ſlander? Why is it that he muſt accuſe their humility of "ingratitude," their grief of "affectation," and their prayers of being "dictatorial" to the Almighty? *Cain hated his brother; and wherefore hated he him? becauſe his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous.* Prayer and devotion are things that Mr. Paine ſhould have let alone, as being out of his province. By attempting however to run them down, he has borne witneſs to the devotion of Chriſtians, and fulfilled what is written in a book which he affects to deſpiſe, *Speaking evil of the things which he underſtands not.*

To admit a God, and then refuſe to worſhip him, is a modern and inconſiſtent prac-

† *Age of Reaſon,* Part II. near the end.

tice. It is a dictate of reason as well as of Revelation, *If the Lord be God, worship him; and if Baal, worship him.* It never was made a question whether the God in whom we believe should receive our adorations. All nations in all ages paid religious homage to the respective deities, or supposed deities in which they believed. Modern unbelievers are the only men who have deviated from this practice. How this is to be accounted for, is a subject worthy of enquiry. To me it appears as follows—

In former times, when men were weary of the worship of the true God, they exchanged it for that of idols. I know of no account of the origin of idolatry so rational as that which is given by Revelation. *Men did not like to retain God in their knowledge: therefore they were given up to a mind void of judgment; to change the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things;* and to defile their bodies by every species of lewdness, and wickedness.* It was thus with the people who came to inhabit the country of Samaria after the Israelites were carried captives into Assyria. At first they seemed desirous to know and fear the God of Israel: but when they came to be informed of his holy character, and what kind of worship he required, they presently discovered their dislike. They pretended to fear him; but

* Rom. i.

it was mere pretence; for every nation *made gods of their own.*† Now gods of their own making would doubtleſs be characterized according to their own mind; they would be patrons of ſuch vices as their makers wiſhed to indulge; gods whom they could approach without fear, and in addreſſing them, "be more at eaſe," as Mr. Hume ſays, than in addreſſing the One living and true God; gods, in fine, the worſhip of whom might be accompanied with banquetings, revellings, drunkenneſs, and lewdneſs.—Theſe, I conceive, were the exerciſes, rather than the mere falling down to an idol, that intereſted the paſſions of the worſhippers. Theſe were the exerciſes that ſeduced the ungodly part of the Iſraelitiſh nation to an imitation of the heathens. They found it extremely diſagreeable, to be conſtantly employed in the worſhip of a *holy* God. Such worſhip would awe their ſpirits, damp their pleaſures, and reſtrain their inclinations. It is not ſurpriſing therefore that they ſhould be continually departing from the worſhip of Jehovah, and leaning towards that which was more congenial with their propenſities. But the ſituation of modern unbelievers is ſingular. Things are ſo circumſtanced with them that they cannot worſhip the gods which they prefer. They never fail to diſcover a ſtrong partiality in favor of heathens; but they have not the face to practice or defend their abſurd idolatries. The

† 2 Kings, xvii.

doctrine of one living and true God has appeared in the world, by means of the preaching of the gospel, with such a blaze of evidence, that it has forced itself into the minds of men, whatever has been the temper of their hearts. The stupid idolatry of past ages is exploded. Christianity has driven it out of Europe. The consequence is, great numbers are obliged to acknowledge a God whom they cannot find in their hearts to worship.

If the light that is gone abroad in the earth would permit the rearing of temples to Venus, or Bacchus, or any of the rabble of heathen deities, there is little doubt but that modern unbelievers would in great numbers become their devotees: but seeing they cannot have a god whose worship shall accord with their inclinations, they seem determined not to worship at all. And to come off with as good a grace as the affair will admit, they compliment the Deity out of his sovereign prerogatives; professing to "love him for his giving them existence, and all their properties, without *Interest*, and without subjecting them to any thing but their own nature."*

The introduction of so large a portion of heathen mythology into the songs, and other entertainments of the stage, sufficiently shews the bias of peoples hearts. The house of God gives them no pleasure: but the resur-

* *Ignor. Philos.* No. XXIV.

rection of the obſcenities, intrigues, and bacchanalian revels of the old heathens, affords them exquiſite delight. In a country where Chriſtian worſhip abounds, this is plainly ſaying, 'What a wearineſs is it! O that it 'were no more! ſince however we cannot 'introduce the worſhip of the gods, we will 'neglect all worſhip, and celebrate the prai-'ſes of our favourite deities in another form'. In a country where deiſm has gained the aſcendency, this principle is carried ſtill farther. Its language there is, 'Seeing we can-'not, for ſhame, worſhip any other than the 'one living and true God, let us aboliſh the 'day of worſhip, and ſubſtitute in its place 'one day in ten, which ſhall be devoted 'chiefly to theatrical entertainments, in 'which we can introduce as much heathen-'iſm as we pleaſe.'

Mr. *Hume* acknowledges the *juſtice* of conſidering the Deity as infinitely ſuperior to mankind; but he repreſents it at the ſame time as very generally attended with unpleaſant effects, and magnifies the advantages of having gods which are only a little ſuperior to ourſelves. "While the Deity, he ſays, is "repreſented as infinitely ſuperior to man-"kind, this belief, though altogether juſt, is "apt when joined with ſuperſtitious terrors, "to ſink the human mind into the loweſt ſub-"miſſion and abaſement, and to repreſent the "monkiſh virtues of mortification, penance, "humility and paſſive ſuffering, as the only "qualities which are acceptable to him.

"But where the gods are conceived to be "only a little ſuperior to mankind, and to "have been many of them advanced from "that inferior rank, we are more at our eaſe "in our addreſſes to them, and may even "without profaneneſs aſpire ſometimes to a "rivalſhip and emulation of them. Hence "activity, ſpirit, courage, magnanimity, "love of liberty, and all the virtues which "aggrandize a people."*

It is eaſy to perceive from this paſſage, that though Mr. Hume acknowledges the *juſtice* of conceiving of a God infinitely ſuperior to us, yet his *inclination* is the other way. In a nation at leaſt, the bulk of which will be ſuppoſed to be inclined to ſuperſtition, it is better, according to his reaſoning, and more friendly to virtue, to promote the worſhip of a number of imaginary deities, than of the one only living and true God. Thus *the fool ſaith in his heart, no God!*

The ſum of the whole is this, modern unbelievers are deiſts in theory, pagans in inclination, and atheiſts in practice.

If deiſts loved the one only living and true God, they would delight in worſhipping him: for love cannot be inoperative; and the only poſſible way for it to operate towards an infinitely glorious and all-perfect Being is by worſhipping his name, and obeying his will. If Mr. *Paine* really felt for "The honor of his Creator," as he af-

* *Differ. on the Nat. Hiſt. of Rel.* X.

fects to do,* he would mourn in ſecret for all the great wickedneſs which he has committed againſt him; he would lie in the duſt before him, not merely as "an out-caſt, a beggar, and a worm," but as a ſinner, deſerving his eternal diſpleaſure. He would be glad of a Mediator, through whom he might approach his offended Creator; and would conſider Redemption by his blood not as "a fable," but a divine reality, including all his ſalvation, and all his deſire. Yes, he himſelf would "turn devout;" and it would be ſaid of him as of Saul of Tarſus, *Behold he prayeth!* Nor would his prayers, though importunate, be "dictatorial." or his grief "affected." On the contrary, he would look on Him whom he hath pierced, and mourn, as one mourneth for an only ſon; and be in bitterneſs, as one that is in bitterneſs for his firſt-born But theſe are things pertaining to *godlineſs;* things, alas for him, the mention of which is ſufficient to inflame his mind with malignity, and provoke him to the moſt outrageous and abuſive language.

* *Age of Reaſon*, Part I. p. 5.

CHAP. III.

The Chriſtian ſtandard of morality is enlarged, and free from impunity: but deiſm confines our obligations to thoſe duties which reſpect our own ſpecies, and greatly palliates vice with regard to a breach even of them.

PERSONS who profeſs the ſtricteſt regard to the rule of duty, and carry the extent of it to the higheſt pitch, may, it is allowed, be inſincere, and contradict, by their practice, what they advance in their profeſſions. But thoſe whoſe ideas of virtue are low and contracted, and who embrace every opportunity to reconcile the vices of the world with its ſacred precepts, cannot poſſibly be accounted any other than its enemies.

That which the Scriptures call *holineſs*, *ſpirituality*, *&c.* as much ſurpaſſes every thing that goes under the names of morality and virtue amongſt unbelievers, as a living man ſurpaſſes a painting, or even a rude and imperfect daubing. If in this controverſy I have uſed theſe terms to expreſs the ſcriptural ideas, it is not becauſe in their ordinary acceptation they are equal to the purpoſe, but for the ſake of meeting unbelievers upon their own ground. I have a right however to underſtand by them, thoſe dis-

positions of the mind, whatever they be, which are *right, fit, or amiable;* and so explained, I undertake to prove that the morality and virtue inculcated by the gospel, is enlarged, and free from impurity, while that which is taught by its adversaries is the reverse.

It is a distinguishing property of the Bible, that all its precepts aim directly at the heart. It never goes about to form the mere exterior of man. To merely external duties it is a stranger. It forms the lives of men no otherwise than by forming their dispositions. It never addresses itself to their vanity, selfishness, or any other corrupt propensity.—You are not pressed to consider what men will think of you, or how it will affect your temporal interest; but what is right, and what is necessary to your eternal well-being. If you comply with its precepts, you must *be*, and not merely *seem to be*. It is the heart that is required; and all the different prescribed forms of worship and obedience, are but so many modifications, or varied expressions of it.

Is any thing like this to be found in the writings of deists? No. Their deity does not seem to take cognizance of the heart. According to them, "There is no merit or crime in intention."* There morality only goes to form the exterior of man. It allows the utmost scope for wicked desires, provid-

* Volney's *Law of Nature*, p. 18.

ed they be not carried into execution to the injury of ſociety.

The morality which the Scriptures inculcate is ſummed up in theſe few words, *Thou ſhalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy ſoul, with all thy mind, with all thy ſtrength; and thy neighbor as thy ſelf.*— This ſingle principle is competent to the government of all intelligent nature. It is a band that would hold together the whole rational creation; and diffuſe peace, order, and happineſs wherever it exiſted.

If mankind loved God ſupremely, there would be no idolatry upon earth, nor any of its attendant abominations; no profaning the name of God, nor making a gain of godlineſs; no oppoſing, corrupting, perverting, nor abuſing the truth; no perjuries, nor hypocriſies; no deſpiſing of thoſe that are good; no arrogance, ingratitude, pride, nor ſelf-complacency under the ſmiles of providence; and no murmuring, heart-riſing, fullenneſs, nor ſuicide under its frowns. Love would render it their meat and drink to fear, honor, and obey him, and induce them to take every thing well at his hands.—

And if they loved their fellow-creatures as themſelves, for his ſake, there would be no wars, rivalſhips, antipathies, nor breach of treaties between nations; no envyings, ſtrifes, wrongs, ſlanders, duels, litigations, nor intrigues between neighbors; no flattering complaiſance, nor perſecuting bitterneſs in religion; no deceit, fraud, nor over-reaching

in trade; no tyranny, venality, haughtineſs, nor oppreſſion amongſt the great; no envy, diſcontent, diſaffection, cabals, nor evil-deviſings among common people; no murders, robberies, thefts, burglaries, nor brothels, in city or country; no cruelty in parents or maſters; no ingratitude nor diſobedience in children or ſervants; no unkindneſs, treachery, nor implacable reſentments between friends; no illicit connexions between the ſexes; no infidelities, jealouſies, nor bitter contentions in families; in ſhort, none of thoſe ſtreams of death, one or more of which flow through every vein of ſociety, and poiſon its enjoyments.

Such is the principle and rule of Chriſtian morality; and what has deiſm to ſubſtitute in its place? Can it find a ſuccedaneum for love? No—but it propoſes the love of *ourſelves* inſtead of the love of God. Lord *Bolingbroke* reſolves all morality into *ſelf-love* as its firſt principle. "We love ourſelves," ſays he, "we love our families, we "love the particular ſocieties to which we "belong: and our benevolence extends at "laſt to the whole race of mankind. Like "ſo many different vortices, the centre of "all is ſelf-love."* Such alſo are the principles of *Volney*.

Could this diſpoſition be admitted as a proper ſource of moral action, the world would certainly not be wanting in morality.

* Poſthum. Works, Vol. V. p. 82.

All men poſſeſs at leaſt the *principle* of it, whether they carry it to the extent which Lord Bolingbroke propoſes, or not; for tho' ſome may err in the choice of their end, and others in the means of obtaining it; yet no man was ever ſo wanting in regard to himſelf as intentionally to purſue his own injury. —But if it ſhould prove that to render ſelf-love the ſource of moral action is the ſame thing as for every individual to treat himſelf as the Supreme Being; and, therefore, that this ſaid ſelf-love, inſtead of being a ſource of virtue, is of the very eſſence of vice, and the ſource of all the miſchief in the univerſe, conſequences may follow of a very different complexion.

To ſubordinate ſelf-love I have no objection. It occupies a place in the Chriſtian ſtandard of morality, being the meaſure of that love which we owe to our fellow-creatures. And as the univerſal love which we owe to them does not hinder but that ſome of them, by reaſon of their ſituation, or peculiar relation to us, may require a larger portion of our regard than others, it is the ſame with reſpect to ourſelves. Our own concerns are our own immediate charge; and thoſe which are of the greateſt importance, ſuch as the concerns of our ſouls, undoubtedly require a proportionate degree of attention. But all this does not affect the preſent ſubject of enquiry. It is our *ſupreme*, and not our ſubordinate regard, that will ever be the ſource of action.

I take it for granted that it is the intention of every good government, human or divine, to *unite* its ſubjects, and not to ſet them at variance. But there can be no union without a common object of regard.—Either a character whom all love and venerate, or an end which all purſue, or both, is that to a community which a head ſtone is to an arch; nor can they keep together without it. It is thus that the love of God holds creation together: He is that lovely character to whom all holy intelligences bear ſupreme affection; and the diſplay of his glory, in the univerſal triumph of truth and righteouſneſs, is that end which they all purſue. Thus united in their grand object, they cannot but feel a union of heart with one another, ariſing from, what is common to every other voluntary union, a congeniality of ſentiments and purſuits

But if our ſupreme affection terminate on ourſelves, and no being, created or uncreated, be regarded but for our own ſakes, it is manifeſt there can be no union beyond the ſphere in which other beings become voluntarily ſubſervient to our wiſhes. The Supreme Being, if our plan do not comport with his, will be continually thwarting us; and ſo we ſhall be always at variance with *him*. And as to created beings, thoſe individuals whom we deſire to be ſubſervient to our wiſhes, having the ſame right, and the ſame inclination to require that we ſhould be ſubſervient to theirs, will alſo be continually

thwarting us; and ſo we ſhall always be at variance with *them.* In ſhort, nothing but an endleſs ſucceſſion of diſcord and confuſion can be the conſequence. Every one ſetting up for pre-eminence, every one muſt, of courſe, contribute to the general ſtate of anarchy and miſery which will pervade the community. Such is, in fact, the ſtate of this apoſtate world; and, but for divine providence, which, for wiſe ends, balances all human affairs, by cauſing one ſet of evils to counteract the influence of another, it muſt be overſet by its own diſorders.

To regard every other being, created or uncreated, only for our own ſakes, is ſupreme ſelf-love; and inſtead of being a ſource of virtue, is itſelf abominable, and the ſource of all the miſchief and miſery in the univerſe. All the evils juſt enumerated are to be traced to this principle as their common parent: nor is there any ground of hope that it will ever produce effects of a different nature. Some perſons have talked much of "ſelf-love *ripening* into benevolence." Had it been ſaid *malevolence*, it had been nearer the truth: for it is contrary to all experience that any thing ſhould change its nature by becoming more mature. No, a child in knowledge may diſcern that if ever genuine benevolence exiſt in the breaſt of an individual, or extend its healing wings over a bleeding world, it muſt be by the ſubverſion of this principle, and by the prevalence of that religion which teaches us to love

God ſupremely, ourſelves ſubordinately, and our fellow-creatures as ourſelves.

To furniſh a ſtandard of morality, ſome of our adverſaries have had recourſe to *the Laws of the State*; avowing them to be the rule or meaſure of virtue. Mr. *Hobbes* maintained that *The civil law was the ſole foundation of right and wrong*, and that *religion had no obligation but as enjoined by the magiſtrate:* and Lord *Bolingbroke* often writes in a ſtrain nearly ſimilar, diſowning any other ſanction or penalty by which obedience to the law of nature is enforced, than thoſe which are provided by the laws of the land.*

But this rule is defective, abſurd, contradictory, and ſubverſive of all true morality. Firſt, it is groſsly defective. This is juſtly repreſented by a prophet of their own. "It "is a narrow notion of innocence, ſays *Se-* "*neca*, to meaſure a man's goodneſs only by "the law. Of how much larger extent is the "rule of duty, or of good offices, than that "of legal right? How many things are there "which piety, humanity, liberality, juſtice, "and fidelity require, which yet are not "within the compaſs of the public ſtatutes?"† Secondly, it is abſurd: for if the public ſtatutes be the only ſtandard of right and wrong, legiſlators in framing them could be under no law; nor is it poſſible that in

* *Works*, Vol. V. p. 90.

† Leland's *Advantage and Neceſſity of Revelation*, Vol. II. Pt. II. Ch. III. p. 42.

any inſtance they ſhould have enacted injuſtice. Thirdly, It is contradictory. Human laws, we all know, require different, and oppoſite things in different nations; and in the ſame nation at different times. If this principle be right, it is right for deiſts to be perſecuted for their opinions at one period, and to perſecute others for theirs at another.

Finally, it is *ſubverſive of all true morality*. "The civil laws, as Dr. *Leland* has obſerved, "take no cognizance of ſecret crimes, and "provide no puniſhment for internal bad "diſpoſitions, or corrupt affections. A man "may be ſafely as wicked as he pleaſes, on "this principle, provided he can manage ſo "as to eſcape puniſhment from the laws of "his country, which very bad men, and "thoſe that are guilty of great vices eaſily "may, and frequently do evade."

Rouſſeau has recourſe to *feelings* as his ſtandard. "I have only to conſult myſelf, "he ſays, concerning what I ought to do. "All that I *feel* to be right, is right. Whatever I *feel* to be wrong is wrong. All the "morality of our actions lies in the judgment we ourſelves form of them.*" By this rule his conduct through life appears to have been directed, as we ſhall hereafter perceive.

But that on which our opponents inſiſt the moſt, and with the greateſt ſhew of argument, is *the law and light of nature*. This is their profeſſed rule on almoſt all occaſi-

* *Emilius*, Vol. I. pp. 166—168.

ons; and its praiſes they are continually ſounding. I have no deſire to depreciate the light of nature, or to diſparage its value as a rule. On the contrary, I conſider it as occupying an important place in the divine government. Whatever may be ſaid of the light poſſeſſed by the heathen as being derived from Revelation, I feel no difficulty in acknowledging, that the grand law which they are under is that of nature. Revelation itſelf appears to me ſo to repreſent it; holding it up as the rule by which they ſhall be judged, and declaring its dictates to be ſo clear as to leave them *without excuſe*.* Nature and Scripture appear to me to be as much in harmony as Moſes and Chriſt; both are celebrated in the ſame Pſalm.†

By the *light of nature*, however, I do not mean thoſe ideas which heathens have actually entertained, many of which have been darkneſs; but thoſe which were preſented to them by the works of creation, and which they might have poſſeſſed had they been deſirous of retaining God in their knowledge. And by the *dictates of nature*, with regard to right and wrong, I underſtand thoſe things which appear to the mind of a perſon ſincerely diſpoſed to underſtand and practice his duty, to be *natural, fit, or reaſonable*. There is doubtleſs an eternal difference between right and wrong; and this difference, in a vaſt variety of inſtances, is manifeſt to

* Rom. ii. 12—16. i. 20.
† Pſ. xix.

every man who ſincerely and impartially conſiders it. So manifeſt have the power and Godhead of the Creator been rendered in every age, that no perſon of an upright diſpoſition could, through mere miſtake, fall into idolatry or impiety; and every one who has continued in theſe abominations is *without excuſe*. The deſire alſo which every human being feels of having juſtice done to him from all other perſons muſt render it ſufficiently manifeſt to his judgment that he ought to do the ſame to them; and wherein he acts otherwiſe, his conſcience, unleſs it be feared as with a hot iron, muſt accuſe him.

But does it follow from hence that Revelation is unneceſſary. I trow not. It is one thing for nature to afford ſo much light, in matters of right and wrong, as to leave the ſinner without excuſe; and another to afford him any well-grounded hope of forgiveneſs, or to anſwer his difficulties concerning the account which ſomething within him ſays he muſt hereafter give of his preſent conduct.

Farther, It is one thing to leave ſinners without excuſe in ſin, and another thing to recover them from it. That the light of nature is inſufficient for the latter, is demonstrated by melancholy fact. Inſtead of returning to God and virtue, thoſe nations which have poſſeſſed the higheſt degrees of it have gone farther and farther into immorality. There is not a ſingle example of a people, of their own accord, returning to

the acknowledgment of the true God, or extricating themſelves from the moſt irrational ſpecies of idolatry, or deſiſting from the moſt odious kinds of vice. Thoſe nations where ſcience diffuſed a more than ordinary luſtre, were as ſuperſtitious, and as wicked as the moſt barbarous; and in many inſtances exceeded them. It was, I doubt not, from a cloſe obſervation of the different efficacy of nature and ſcripture, that the writer of the *Nineteenth Pſalm* (a Pſalm which Mr. Paine pretends to admire) after having given a juſt tribute of praiſe to the former, affirmed of the latter, *The Law of Jehovah is perfect converting the ſoul.*

Again, It is one thing for that which is natural, fit, or reaſonable, in matters of duty, to approve itſelf to a mind *ſincerely diſpoſed to underſtand and practice it*, and another to approve itſelf to a mind of an oppoſite deſcription. The judgments of men concerning the dictates of nature are greatly influenced by their prevailing inclinations. —If, under certain circumſtances, they feel prompted to a particular courſe of conduct, they will be apt to conſider that promptitude as a dictate of nature, though it may be no other than corrupt propenſity: and thus, while the law of nature is continually in their mouth, their principles, as well as their conduct, are a continual violation of it.—How was it that, notwithſtanding the light of nature ſhone round the old philoſophers, their minds, in matters of morality,

were dark as night, and their precepts, in many inſtances, full of impurity?—Did nature inſpire *Plato* to teach the doctrine of a community of wives; *Lycurgus* to tolerate dextrous thieving; *Solon* to allow of Sodomy; *Seneca* to encourage drunkenneſs and ſuicide; and almoſt all of them to declare in favor of lewdneſs?* No, verily; it is a perverſion of language to call the principles of ſuch men the dictates of nature: they are unnatural and abominable; as contrary to reaſon as to religion.

It is true, what is called nature by modern infidels, is not quite ſo groſs as the above—but it falls very little ſhort of it. So far as relates to the encouragement of theft, and, perhaps, of unnatural crimes, they would disavow; and for this we are indebted to Chriſtianity: but as to fornication and adultery, they are not a whit behind their predeceſſors.

Lord *Herbert*, the father of the Engliſh deiſts, and whoſe writings are far more ſober than the generality of thoſe who have come after him, apologizes for lewdneſs, in certain caſes, as reſembling thirſt in a dropſy, and inactivity in a lethargy.† Lord *Bolingbroke* unbluſhingly inſinuates, that the only conſideration that can reconcile a man to confine himſelf by marriage to one woman, and a woman to one man, is this, that no-

* See Leland's *Advantage and Neceſſity of Revelation*, Vol. II. pp. 147, 50, 59, 210, 213.

† Leland's *Review, &c.* Vol. I. Lett. I.

thing hinders but that they may indulge their deſires with others.* This is the ſame as accuſing the whole human race of incontinency, and denying that there is any ſuch thing as conjugal fidelity; a plain proof that whoever was clear of this indecent charge, Lord Bolingbroke was not. Mr. *Hume*, who has written a volume on the principles of morality, ſcruples not to ſtigmatize ſelf-denial as "a monkiſh virtue;" and adopts the opinion of a French writer, that "adultery muſt "be practiſed if we would obtain all the ad-"vantages of life; that female infidelity, "when known, is a ſmall thing, and when "unknown, nothing."

It is true, theſe writers will, on ſome occaſions, deſcant in favor of chaſtity, as being conducive to health and reputation; but on others they ſeldom fail to apologize for the contrary, and that under the pretence of indulging the dictates of nature. Yet the ſame things might be alledged in behalf of oppreſſion, revenge, theft, duelling, ambitious war, and a thouſand other vices which deſolate the earth: they are practices which men, placed in certain circumſtances, will feel themſelves prompted to commit; nor is there a vice that can be named but what would admit of ſuch an apology.

Finally, It is one thing for the light of nature to be ſo clear as to render idolatry, impiety, and injuſtice inexcuſeable; and a-

* Works, Vol. V. p. 167.

nother thing to render the *whole will* of our Creator evident, and in the moſt *advantageous manner*. If a perſon, poſſeſſed of only the light of nature, were ever ſo ſincerely deſirous of knowing God, or grieved for the ſins of which his conſcience accuſed him, or attached to the holy, the juſt, and the good; or diſpoſed to obey his Creator's will if he did but underſtand it; though he ſhould be in no danger of confounding the dictates of nature with thoſe of corrupt propenſity, yet he muſt labor under great diſadvantages: which, allowing they might not affect his eternal ſtate, yet would greatly injure his preſent peace and uſefulneſs.

To illuſtrate this remark, let us ſuppoſe the inhabitants of a province to throw off the government of a juſt and lawful prince. Being once engaged, they may feel themſelves impelled to go forward. They may chuſe new rulers, and uſe all poſſible means to efface every ſign and memorial of the authority of their ancient ſovereign. They may even labor to forget, and teach their children to forget, if poſſible, that there ever was ſuch a character in being, to whom they owed allegiance. Yet, after all, there may be certain traces and memorials of his government which it is not in their power to efface. Yea, there may be continued inſtances for forbearance and clemency, which, in ſpite of all their efforts, will bear witneſs of his goodneſs and juſt authority over them.

Thus it was that God, while he *ſuffered*

all nations to walk in their own ways, nevertheleſs LEFT NOT HIMSELF WITHOUT A WITNESS, *in that he did good, and gave them rain from heaven, and fruitful ſeaſons, filling their hearts with food and gladneſs.* But as the memorials of juſt authority in the one caſe, though ſufficient to leave the rebellious without excuſe, would not contain a *full* expreſſion of the prince's will, nor be conveyed in ſo *advantageous* a manner as that in which he treated his profeſſed ſubjects; ſo the light afforded by the works of nature, and the continued goodneſs of God, in the other, though ſufficient to leave the world without excuſe, does not expreſs his *whole* will, nor convey what it does expreſs ſo *advantageouſly* as by Revelation. And as an individual reſiding in the midſt of the rebellious province, whoſe heart might relent, and who might long to return to his allegiance, would be under inexpreſſible diſadvantages, ſo it muſt neceſſarily be with a heathen whoſe deſire ſhould be towards the God againſt whom he had ſinned.

The amount is, that modern unbelievers have no ſtandard of morals, except it be their own inclination. Morality with them is any thing, or nothing, as conveniency requires. On ſome occaſions they will praiſe that of Jeſus Chriſt: but ere we can have time to aſk them, Why then do you not ſubmit to it, they are employed in oppoſing it. Attend to their general declamations in favor of virtue, and you will be ready to ima-

gine they are its warmeſt friends: but follow them up, and obſerve their expoſition of particular precepts, and you will be convinced that they are its decided enemies; applauding in the groſs that which they are ever undermining in detail.

By the fooliſh and diſcordant accounts which theſe writers give of morality, it ſhould ſeem that they know not what it is. Every new ſpeculator is diſſatisfied with the definition of his predeceſſor, and endeavors to mend it.—"Virtue," ſays Lord *Shafteſbury*, "is a ſenſe of beauty, of harmony, of order, "and proportion, an affection towards the "whole of our kind, or ſpecies."—"It is," ſays Lord *Bolingbroke*, "only the love of "*ourſelves*." "It is every thing that tends to "preſerve and perfect man," ſays *Volney*; and as "good reputation" has this tendency, it is in his account "a moral good."* "It "is whatever is *uſeful* in ſociety," ſays Mr. *Hume*; and as "health, cleanlineſs, facility "of expreſſion, broad ſhoulders, and taper "legs" are of uſe, they are to be reckoned amongſt the virtues. To this might have been added, *a large portion of effrontery*, as the laſt named writer aſſures us, it may be from his own experience, that "Nothing carries "a man through the world like a true ge-"nuine, natural impudence."† Mr. *Paine* brings up the rear, and informs us, "It is

* *Law of Nature*, p. 17.

† *Enquiry concerning the principles of morals*, § 6, 7, 8.—*Eſſays Moral and Political*, Eſ. III. p. 15.

"*doing juſtice, loving mercy, and* .... en-
"deavoring to make our fellow-creatures
"happy." O Paine, had you but for once ſuffered yourſelf to be taught by a Prophet, and have quoted his words as they ſtand, you would undoubtedly have borne away the palm: but you had rather write nonſenſe than ſay any thing in favor of *godlineſs*.

It is worthy of notice, that amidſt all the diſcordance of theſe writers, they agree in excluding the Divine Being from their theory of morals. They think after their manner; but *God is not in all their thoughts.*—In comparing the Chriſtian doctrine of morality, the ſum of which is *love*, with their atheiſtical jargon, one ſeems to hear the voice of the Almighty, ſaying, *Who is this that darkeneth counſel with words without knowledge?—Fear God, and keep his commandments; for this is the whole of man.*

The words of Scripture are ſpirit and life. They are the language of *love*. Every exhortation of Chriſt and his apoſtles is impregnated with this ſpirit. Let the reader turn to the twelfth chapter of the epiſtle to the Romans, for an example, and read it carefully; let him find, if he can, any thing in the pureſt part of the writings of deiſts that is worthy of being compared with it.—No; virtue itſelf is no longer virtue in their hands. It loſes its charms when they affect to embrace it. Their touch is that of the cold hand of death. The moſt lovely object

is deprived by it of life and beauty, and reduced to a ſhrivelled maſs of inactive formality.

CHAP. IV.

Chriſtianity furniſhes motives to a virtuous life, which Deiſm either rejects, or attempts to undermine.

SO long as our adverſaries profeſs a regard to virtue, and acknowledge with Lord Bolingbroke, that "the goſpel is in all caſes one continued leſſon of the ſtricteſt morality: of juſtice, of benevolence, and of univerſal charity,"* they muſt allow thoſe to be the beſt principles which furniſh the moſt effectual motives for reducing it to practice.

Now there is not a doctrine in the whole compaſs of Chriſtianity but what is improveable to this purpoſe. It is a grand peculiarity of the goſpel, that none of its principles are merely ſpeculative: each is pregnant with a practical uſe. Nor does the diſcovery of it require any extraordinary degree of ingenuity: real Chriſtians, however weak as to their natural capacities, have always been taught by the goſpel of Chriſt, that *denying ungodlineſs, and worldly luſts, they ſhould live ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly in the preſent world.*

* *Works*, Vol. V. p. 188.

Ancient philoſophers have taught many things in favor of morality, ſo far at leaſt as reſpect juſtice and goodneſs towards our fellow-creatures; but where are the motives by which the minds of the people, or even their own minds, have been moved to a compliance with them? They framed a curious machine; but who amongſt them could diſcover a power to work it? What principles have appeared in the world under the names either of philoſophy or religion, that can bear a compariſon with the following?—

God ſo loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whoſoever believeth in him ſhould not periſh, but have everlaſting life—Herein is love; not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and ſent his Son to be a propitiation for our ſins. Beloved, if God ſo loved us, we ought alſo to love one another. —Let all bitterneſs, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil-ſpeaking, be put away from you, with all malice: and be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God, for Chriſt's ſake, hath forgiven you—Be ye followers, or imitators of God, as dear children; and walk in love, as Chriſt alſo hath loved us, and given himſelf for us, an offering, and a ſacrifice to God of a ſweet-ſmelling ſavour—Ye are a choſen generation, a royal prieſthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye ſhould ſhew forth the praiſes of him who hath called you out of darkneſs into his marvellous light.—Come out from

amongſt them, and be ye ſeparate, ſaith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you; and will be a Father unto you, and ye ſhall be my ſons and daughters, ſaith the Lord Almighty. Having, therefore, theſe promiſes, dearly beloved, let us cleanſe ourſelves from all filthineſs of the fleſh and ſpirit, perfecting holineſs in the fear of God—If there be, therefore, any conſolation in Chriſt, if any comfort of love, if any fellowſhip of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies; fulfil ye my joy,—be of one accord, of one mind: let nothing be done through ſtrife, or vain glory, but in lowlineſs of mind let each eſteem other better than themſelves—Dearly beloved, I beſeech you as ſtrangers and pilgrims, abſtain from fleſhly luſts which war againſt the ſoul; having your converſation honeſt among the Gentiles, that whereas they ſpeak againſt you as evil-doers, they may by your good works which they ſhall behold, glorify God in the day of viſitation—Ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your ſpirit, which are God's—The love of Chriſt conſtraineth us, becauſe we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: and that he died for all, that they who live ſhould not henceforth live unto themſelves, but unto him who died for them, and roſe again—The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in the which the heavens ſhall paſs away with a great noiſe, and the elements ſhall melt with fervent heat: the earth alſo, and the works that are therein, ſhall be burnt up. See-

*ing then that all these things shall be dissolved, What manner of persons ought ye to be, in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for, and hastening unto the coming of the day of God!—Hold fast that which thou hast; let no man take thy crown!—To him that overcometh will I grant to sit down with me in my throne, even as I also overcome, and am set down with my father in his throne.**

These are motives by which Christians in every age have been induced to practise that morality which Bolingbroke, Paine, and many others, while writing against Christianity, have been compelled to applaud: but the far greater part of them are rejected by deists; and what will they substitute of equal efficacy in their place? The love of Christ constraineth *us;* but what have they to constrain *them?* Will self-love, or the beauty, or utility of virtue answer the purpose? Let history and observation determine.

It may be alledged, however, that deists do not reject the *whole* of these important motives; for that some of them at least admit the doctrine of *a future life*, which, with the acknowledgment of one living and true God, may be thought sufficient for all the purposes of morality.

That the doctrine of a future life is of great importance in the moral system, is al-

* John, iii. 18. 1 John, iii. 10 11. Eph. iv. 31, 32. v. 1, 2. Pet. ii. 9. 2 Cor. vi. 17, 18. vii. 1. Phil. ii. 1, 2, 3. 1 Pet. ii. 11, 12. 1 Cor. vi. 20. 2 Cor. v. 14, 15. 2 Pet. iii. 10—12. Rev. iii. 11, 21.

lowed; but the greateſt truth, if diſſevered from other truths of equal importance, will be diveſted of its energy. A hand diſſevered from the body might as well be repreſented as ſufficient for the purpoſes of labor, as one or two unconnected principles for the purpoſe of morality. This is actually the caſe in the preſent inſtance. The doctrine of a future life, as held by Chriſtians, has ſtimulated them to labor and ſuffer without intermiſſion. From a *reſpect to this recompenſe of reward*, a kingdom has been refuſed, where the acceptance of it would have interfered with a good conſcience. Yea, life itſelf has been ſacrificed, and that not in a few, but in innumerable inſtances, where it could not be retained but at the expenſe of truth and uprightneſs. But is it thus amongſt deiſts? Does the doctrine of a future life, as held by them, produce any ſuch effects? When was it known, or heard of, that they ſacrificed any thing for this, or any other principle of a moral nature?—Who amongſt them ever thought of ſuch a thing; or who expected it at their hands?

But this not all: There is ſuch a connexion in truth, that if one part of it be given up, it will render us leſs friendly towards other parts, and ſo deſtroy their efficacy. This alſo is actually the caſe in the preſent inſtance. Our adverſaries do not cordially embrace even this truth; but on the contrary are continually undermining it, and rendering it of no effect. Lord *Herbert*, it is true, con-

ſidered it as an eſſential article of natural religion; and it was his opinion that he could ſcarcely be accounted a reaſonable creature who denied it: but this is far from being the caſe with later deiſtical writers; the greater part of whom either deny it, or repreſent it as a matter of doubt. Some of them diſown every principle by which it is ſupported, and others go ſo far as to hold it up to ridicule, laboring withal to prove the hope of it unfriendly to the diſintereſted love of virtue.

Volney in his *Law of Nature, or Catechiſm for French Citizens*, ſays nothing about it.—*Paine* juſt touches upon it in the outſet of his *Age of Reaſon*, by informing us, that "He *hopes* for happineſs beyond this life:" but as happineſs has its counterpart, and ſtands upon the general doctrine of *retribution*, he is afraid to ſay he *believes* it. It muſt be reduced to a mere matter of "probability," leſt the thoughts of it ſhould damp him in his preſent purſuits, and render him "the ſlave of terror."*

Bolingbroke, though he acknowledges its antiquity, and great utility in promoting virtue, yet repreſents it as a "mere invention of philoſophers, and legiſlators," and as being "originally an hypotheſis, and which "may therefore be a vulgar error." "Reaſon," he ſays, "will neither affirm nor deny a future ſtate." By this the reader might be led to expect that this writer was neither for

* *Age of Reaſon*, Pt. I. p. 1. Pt. II. 100, 101.

it, nor againſt it; yet the whole of his reaſonings, are directed to undermine it.*

Hume, like the writer laſt mentioned, acknowledges the utility of the doctrine, but queſtions its truth. He would not have people diſabuſed, or delivered from ſuch a prejudice, becauſe it would free them from one reſtraint upon their paſſions. Any perſon who ſhould undertake this work, he allows, would be a bad citizen; yet he might, for ought he knows, be a good reaſoner.†

Shafteſbury goes farther: he employs all his wit and ſatire in endeavoring to raiſe a laugh at the very idea, repreſenting the heathen world as very happy till Chriſtianity aroſe, and teazed them about a hereafter.—"A new ſort of policy," ſays he, "which "extends itſelf to another world, and con-"ſiders the future lives and happineſs of "men rather than the preſent, has made us "leap beyond the bounds of natural human-"ity, and out of a ſupernatural charity has "taught us the way of plaguing one another "moſt devoutly."‡

Lord *Shafteſbury's* wit may very well be paſſed by as being what it is: it ſuffices, in connection with the foregoing quotations, to ſhew us what efficacy the doctrine of a future life, as held by deiſts, may be expected to poſſeſs. But this writer is not contented

* *Works*, Vol. V.

† *Philoſophical Eſſays*, p. 231.

‡ *Characteriſtics*, Vol. I. p. 18.

with raillery; he muſt alſo attempt to *reaſon* againſt the doctrine, contending that it was a pernicious influence on the morals of men; that it is a mercenary principle, and oppoſed to the diſintereſted love of virtue for its own ſake. "The principle of ſelf-"love," he obſerves, "which is naturally ſo "prevailing in us, is improved, and made "ſtronger by the exerciſe of the paſſions on "a ſubject of more extended intereſt: and "there may be reaſon to apprehend that a "temper of this kind will extend itſelf thro' "all the parts of life. And this has a ten-"dency to create a ſtricter attention to ſelf-"good and private intereſt, and muſt inſen-"ſibly diminiſh the affection towards public "good, or the intereſt of ſociety, and intro-"duce a certain narrowneſs of ſpirit; which "is obſervable in the devout perſons and zea-"lots of almoſt every religious perſuaſion."*

This objection, the reader will recollect, is in direct contradiction to the principles of *Bolingbroke*, and it may be added, of *Volney*, and other deiſtical writers, who maintain ſelf-love to be the origin of virtuous affection. Some Chriſtian writers, in anſwering it, have given up the doctrine of diſintereſted love, allowing that all religious affection is to be traced to the love which we bear to ourſelves as its firſt principle. To me this appears no other than betraying the truth, and ranking Chriſtianity with every ſpecies of apoſtacy,

* *Characteriſtics*, Vol. II. p. 58.

and falſe religion, which have at any time prevailed in the world. A clear idea of the nature of ſelf-love, if I miſtake not, will enable us to determine this queſtion; and to anſwer the deiſtical objection without rendering Chriſtianity a mercenary ſyſtem.

Every man may be conſidered either ſingly, or connectedly; either as a being by himſelf, or as a link in a certain chain of beings. Under one or other of theſe views every man conſiders himſelf while purſuing his own intereſt. If the former, this is to make himſelf the ultimate end of his actions, and to love all other beings, created or uncreated, only as they ſubſerve his intereſt or his pleaſure; this is private ſelf-love; this is mean, and mercenary, and what we commonly underſtand by the term *ſelfiſhneſs*. But if the latter, there is nothing mean or ſelfiſh in it.—He who ſeeks his own well-being in connection with the general good, ſeeks it as he ought to do. No man is required directly to oppoſe his own welfare, though in ſome inſtances he may be required to ſacrifice it for the general good. Neither is it neceſſary that he ſhould be indifferent towards it.—Reaſon, as well as ſcripture, requires us to love ourſelves as we love our neighbor.—To this may be added, every man is not only a link in the chain of intelligent beings, and ſo deſerving of ſome regard from himſelf, as well as from others; but every man's perſon, family, and connexions, and ſtill more the concerns of his ſoul, are, as it were,

his own vineyard, over the intereſts of which it is his peculiar province to exerciſe a watchful care. Only let the care of himſelf and his immediate connexions be in ſubſerviency to the general good, and there is nothing mercenary in it.

I need not multiply arguments to prove that the doctrine of *rewards* does not neceſſarily tend to encourage a mercenary ſpirit, or that it is conſiſtent with the diſintereſted love of virtue. Lord *Shafteſbury* himſelf has acknowledged this. "If by the hope of reward," he ſays, "be underſtood the love and "deſire of virtuous enjoyment, or of the ve"ry practice or exerciſe of virtue in another "life, the expectation or hope of this kind "is ſo far from being derogatory to virtue, "that it is an evidence of our loving it the "more ſincerely, and for its own ſake."*— This ſingle conceſſion contains an anſwer to all which his lordſhip has advanced on the ſubject: for the rewards promiſed in the goſpel are all exactly of the deſcription which he mentions. It is true they are often repreſented under the images of earthly things; but this does not prove that in themſelves they are not pure and ſpiritual. That there is nothing in them adapted to gratify a mercenary ſpirit, the following obſervations will render plain to the meaneſt capacity.

Firſt, The nature of heavenly enjoyments is ſuch as to admit of no monopoly, and con-

* *Characteriſtics*, Vol. II. p. 65, 66.

ſequently to leave no room for the exerciſe of private ſelf-love. Like the beams of the ſun, they are equally adapted to give joy to a world as to an individual: Nay, ſo far is an increaſe in the number of the participants from diminiſhing the quantum of happineſs poſſeſſed by each individual, that it has a tendency to increaſe it. The intereſt of one is the intereſt of all; and the intereſt of all extends to every one.

Secondly, The ſum of heavenly enjoyments conſiſts in a holy likeneſs to God, and in the eternal enjoyment of his favor.* But holy likeneſs to God is the ſame thing as "the very practice or exerciſe of virtue," the hope of which Lord Shafteſbury acknowledges "is ſo far from being derogatory to it, that it is an evidence of our loving it the more ſincerely, and for its own ſake." And as to the enjoyment of the divine favor, a proper purſuit of this object, inſtead of being at variance with diſintereſted affection, clearly *implies* it: for no man can truly deſire the favor of God as his chief good, without a proportionate eſteem of his character, and that for its own excellency: It is impoſſible that the favor of any being whoſe character we diſapprove, ſhould be ſought as our chief good, in preference to every other object in the univerſe But a cordial approbation of the divine character is the ſame thing as a diſintereſted affection to virtue.

* 1 John, iii. 2. Rev. xxi. 3, 4.

Thirdly, The only method by which the rewards of the goſpel are attainable, faith in Chriſt, ſecures the exerciſe of diſintereſted and enlarged virtue. No man has any warrant from the ſcriptures to expect an intereſt in the promiſes of the goſpel, unleſs he cordially acquieſce in his Mediation. But to acquieſce in this, is to acquieſce in the holy government of God, which it was deſigned to glorify; to feel and acknowledge that we deſerved to have been made ſacrifices to divine diſpleaſure; to forego all claim or hope of mercy from every ſelfiſh conſideration; and to be willing to receive forgiveneſs as an act of mere grace, and along with the chief of ſinners. In fine, to acquieſce in this, is to be of one heart with the Saviour of ſinners, which, our adverſaries themſelves being judges, is the ſame thing as to be filled with devoutneſs to God, and benevolence to men; and this, if any thing deſerves that name, is true, diſintereſted, and enlarged virtue.

It is very poſſible that the objections which are made by this writer, as well as Mr. Paine and others, againſt the doctrine of *rewards*, as being ſervile and mercenary, may after all, in reality, be againſt their *counterpart*.—It does not appear to be "the hope of happineſs beyond this life" that excites their diſguſt, though the nature of the Chriſtian's happineſs might be diſagreeable to them; but the fear of being "called to account for the manner in which they have lived in this

world." This it is which even the daring author of *The Age of Reaſon* cannot endure to conſider as a certainty, as the thought of it would render him "the ſlave of terror."—Yet as though he would not have it thought that the dread of futurity rendered him afraid of believing it, he alledges another reaſon: "Our belief, on this principle," he ſays, "would have no merit, and our beſt actions no virtue."* In order then to our actions being virtuous, it is neceſſary, it ſeems, that we be under no law but that of our own inclination; and this will be loving virtue *for its own ſake*. This is at once ſhaking off the divine authority; which, if it could be accompliſhed, might be very agreeable to ſome men: and if, with this they could get fairly rid of a judgment to come, it might be ſtill more agreeable: but, alas, if they ſhould be miſtaken!

It is a fact that the paſſions of hope and fear are planted in our nature by Him who made us; and it may be preſumed they are not planted there in vain. The proper exerciſe of the former has, I conceive, been proved to be conſiſtent with the pureſt, and moſt diſintereſted love; and the ſame thing is proveable of the latter. The hope and fear againſt which theſe writers declaim, are thoſe of a ſlave; and where love is abſent, theſe, it is granted, are the only effects which the doctrine of rewards and puniſhments will

* *Age of Reaſon* Part II. p. 100, 101.

produce. But even here they have their uſe. Terror is the grand principle by which vicious minds are kept in awe. Without this, their licentiouſneſs would be intolerable to ſociety. It is not, however, for the mere purpoſe of reſtraint that threatenings are exhibited, but to expreſs the diſpleaſure of God againſt all unrighteouſneſs and ungodlineſs of men, and his reſolution to puniſh it. Some are hereby taught the evil of their ways to a good purpoſe, and all are fairly warned, and their perſeverance in ſin is rendered inexcuſable.

Before our adverſaries object to this, they ſhould ſhew the impropriety of human laws being accompanied with penalties. Let them furniſh us with a ſyſtem of government in which men may be guilty of crimes without fear of being called to account for them; and in which thoſe who are enemies to virtue are to be governed merely by the love of it. If it be improper to threaten ſinners, it is improper to puniſh them; and if it be improper to puniſh them, it is improper for moral government to be exerciſed. But if it be thus in the government of God, there is no good reaſon to be given why it ſhould not be the ſame in human governments; that is, there is no good reaſon why ſervants, unleſs they chooſe to do otherwiſe, ſhould not diſobey their maſters, children their parents, and private individuals in a ſtate be continually riſing up to deſtroy all juſt authority.

The above may ſuffice to aſcertain the weight of Lord *Shaftesbury*'s objections to the doctrine of rewards: and now I ſhall take the liberty to retort the charge, and attempt to prove that the epithets "narrow and ſelfiſh," which he applies to the Chriſtian ſyſtem, properly belong to his own.

In his *Inquiry concerning Virtue*, contained in the ſecond volume of his *Characteriſticks*, though he allows it to conſiſt in our being proportionably affected towards the whole ſyſtem to which we bear a relation;* and that this world may be only a part of a more extended ſyſtem;† yet he ſtudiouſly leaves out God as the head of it. Amongſt all the *relations* which he enumerates, there is no mention of that between the creature and his Creator. His enlarged and diſintereſted ſcheme of morality is at laſt nothing more than for a creature to regard theſe "of its own kind or ſpecies." Not only is all gentleneſs, kindneſs, and compaſſion to inferior creatures left out, but the love of God is not in it. On the contrary, it is the profeſſed object of his *Inquiry* to prove that virtue, goodneſs, or moral excellency may exiſt without religion, and even "in an atheiſt."§ In ſhort, it is manifeſt that it is the love of God, and not ſelf-love, to which his love of virtue *for its own ſake* ſtands oppoſed. That for which he pleads is the impious ſpirit of a child, who diſregarding his

* Page 17.
† p. 20. § p. 6.

father's favour, pays no attention to his commands, *as his commands*; but complies with them only on account of their approving themselves to his own mind. But this is no other than self-will, which, instead of being opposed to self-love, is one of its genuine exercises.

"Our holy religion," says this sneering writer, "takes but little notice of the most "heroic virtues, such as zeal for the public, "and our country."* That Christianity takes but little notice of what is commonly called *patriotism*, is admitted; and if Lord Shaftesbury had been free from that "narrowness of mind" which it is his intention here to censure; yea, if he had only kept to his own definition of virtue, "A regard to those of our own kind or species," he would have taken as little. By the public good he evidently means no more than the temporal prosperity of a particular country; which is to be sought at the expence of all other countries with whom it happens, justly or unjustly, to be at variance. Christianity, we acknowledge, knows nothing of this spirit. Is is superior to it. It is not natural for a Christian to enter into the antipathies, or embroil himself in the contentions of a nation, however he may be occasionally drawn into them. His soul is much more in its element when breathing after the present and future happiness of a world. In underta-

* *Characteristicks*, Vol. I. p. 98, 99.

kings, both public and private, which tend to alleviate the miſeries and enlarge the comforts of human life, Chriſtians have ever been foremoſt; and when they have conceived themſelves lawfully called even into the field of battle, they have not been wanting in valor. But the heroiſm to which they principally aſpire is of another kind: it is that of ſubduing their own ſpirit, doing good againſt evil, ſeeking the preſent and eternal well-being of thoſe who hate them, and laying down their lives if required, for the name of our Lord Jeſus.

Such is the "narrow ſpirit" of Chriſtians; and ſuch have been their "ſelfiſh purſuits." But theſe are things which do not emblazon their names in the account of unbelievers. The murderers of mankind will be applauded before them. But they have enough: their blood is precious in the ſight of the Lord, and their names are embalmed in the memory of the upright.

CHAP. V.

The lives of those who reject the Gospel will not bear a comparison with theirs who embrace it.

NO books are so plain as the lives of men; no characters are so legible as their moral conduct. If the principles of a body of men will not bear this criterion, we may expect to hear them exclaim against it as unfair, and uncertain; but when they have said all, they will endeavour to avail themselves of it if possible. It is thus that the virtues of idolaters are the constant theme of deistical panegyric; and all the corruptions, intrigues, persecutions, wars, and mischiefs, which of late ages have afflicted the earth, are charged to the account of Christians. It is thus that christian ministers, under the name of *priests*, are described as mercenary, designing, and hypocritical; and the lives of hectoring profligates praised in comparison of them.* In short, it is thus that Christians are accused of fanaticism, affectation, ingratitude, presumption, and almost every thing else that is mean and base; and men are persuaded to become deists, with an assurance that by so doing they will "live more consistently and morally, than by any other system."†

* *Hume's Essays, Moral and Political*, Essay XXIV

† Age of Reason, Part I. p. 21.

But let us examine whether these representations accord with fact. Is it fact that the ancient philosophers of Greece and Rome were virtuous characters?—It is true that, like the deists, they talked and wrote much about virtue, and if the latter may be believed, they were very virtuous.—"They opposed each other," says *Voltaire*, "in their dogmas; but in morality they were all agreed." After loading each of them with encomiums, he sums it up by affirming, "There has been no philosopher in all antiquity who has not been desirous of making men better."* This is a very favorable report; and, if well founded, the writer of the first chapter of the epistle to the Romans must not only have dealt largely in calumny, but have possessed the most consummate effrontery, to address such an epistle to the citizens of Rome, who, from their own knowledge, must have been able to contradict him. There are other reports, however, of a very different complexion.

It is no part of my design to enter minutely into this subject; nor is it necessary. Many able writers have proved, from the most authentic sources of information, that the account given of the heathens by the apostle is not exaggerated. An extract or two from their writings will be sufficient for my purpose.

"*Epictetus* bids you *temporise, and wor-*

* *Ignorant Philosopher*, p. 60.

*ſhip the gods after the faſhion of your country.** *Pythagoras* forbids you to *pray to God, becauſe you know not what is convenient.*"† *Plutarch* commends Cato Uticenſis for killing himſelf amidſt philoſophic tho'ts, with reſolution and deliberation, after reading Plato on the immortality of the ſoul.‡ *Cicero* pleads for ſelf-murder. Herein he was ſeconded by *Brutus*, *Caſſius*, and others, who practiſed it. Many of their learned men applauded their opinion and practice. —*Seneca* thus pleads for it: "If thy mind "be melancholy and in miſery, thou mayeſt "put a period to this wretched condition: "wherever thou lookeſt, there is an end to "it. See that precipice; there thou mayeſt "have liberty. Seeſt thou that ſea, that riv-"er, that well? liberty is at the bottom of "it: that little tree? freedom hangs upon "it: thy own neck, thy own throat may be "a refuge to thee, from ſuch ſervitude; yea, "every vein of thy body."§

"We may find in the heathen philoſophers cuſtomary ſwearing commended, if not by their precepts, yet by the examples of their beſt moraliſts. *Plato*, *Socrates*, *Seneca*, and *Julian* the Emperor, in whoſe works numerous oaths by Jupiter, Hercules, the Sun, Serapis, and the like, do occur. In the ſame manner we ſee the unnatural love of

* *Enchiridion*, Cap. 38. pag. m. 56.
† Diog. *Laertius*.
‡ Plutarch's *Life of Cato*, near the end.
§ *De ira*, Lib. 3, Cap. 15, pag. m. 319.

boys recommended.* *Ariſtippus* maintained *that it was lawful for a wiſe man to ſteal, commit adultery, and ſacrilege, when opportunity offered; for that none of theſe actions were naturally evil, ſetting aſide the vulgar opinion, which was introduced into the world by ſilly and illiterate people—that a wiſe man might publicly, without ſhame or ſcandal, keep company with common harlots, if his inclinations led him to it.* "May not a beautiful "woman be made uſe of, he aſks, becauſe "ſhe is fair: or a youth becauſe he is love-"ly? *Certainly they may.*"†

If, as *Voltaire* aſſerts, it was the deſire of theſe philoſophers to make men better, aſſuredly they employed very extraordinary means to accompliſh their deſire.

What are the lives recorded by *Plutarch?* Many of them no doubt entertained a high ſenſe of honor, and poſſeſſed a large portion of patriotiſm. But were either of theſe morality? If by this term he meant ſuch diſpoſitions of the mind as are right, fit and amiable, it was not. Their ſenſe of honor was not of that kind which made them ſcorn to do evil; but like the falſe honor of modern duelliſts, conſiſted merely in a dread of diſgrace. It induced many of them to carry about them the fatal means of ſelf-deſtruction: and rather than fall into the hands of an ad-

* Juvenal Satyr II. Ver. 10.

† Diog. *Laertius*, Vol. I. pag. m. 165, 166. See in Millar's *Hiſtory of the Propagation of Chriſtianity*, Vol. I. p. 63 r—65.

verſary, to make uſe of them. And as to their patriotiſm, generally ſpeaking, it operated not merely in the preſervation of their country, but in endeavors to extend and aggrandize it, at the expenſe of other nations. It was a patriotiſm inconſiſtent with juſtice, and good will to men. Add to this, that fornication, adultery, and unnatural crimes were common amongſt them.

As to the moral ſtate of ſociety among heathens, both ancient and modern, we may have occaſion to conſider this a little more particularly hereafter. At preſent I would inquire, Is it fact that the perſecutions, intrigues, wars, and miſchiefs of late ages are to be charged to the account of Chriſtianity?

With regard to *perſecution*, nothing is more common with our adverſaries than to lay it wholly at our door. They are continually alledging that the heathens all agreed to tolerate each other till Chriſtianity aroſe.—Thus writes Shaftesbury,* Hume,† Voltaire,‡ Gibbon,‖ and Paine.§ That the heathens tolerated each other before the introduction of Chriſtianity, is allowed; and they did the ſame after it. It was not againſt each other that their enmity was directed. In the diverſity of their idols and modes of worſhip, there were indeed *different adminiſtrations, but* it was *the ſame lord:* whereas in the religion of Jeſus Chriſt there was nothing

* *Characteriſtics,* Vol. I. p. 18. † *Eſſay on Parties.*
‡ *Ignor. Philos.* p. 83. ‖ *Hiſt. of Decl.* Ch. II. p. 29.
§ *Age of Reaſon,* Part II. Pref.

that could aſſociate with heatheniſm, but every thing that threatened its utter ſubverſion.

It is allowed alſo that individual perſecution, except in a few inſtances, commenced with Chriſtianity: but who began the practice?—Was it Jeſus that perſecuted Herod and Pontius Pilate; or they him?—Did Peter, and James, and John, and Paul ſet up for inquiſitors, and perſecute the Jews and Romans; or the Jews and Romans them?—Did the primitive Chriſtians diſcover any diſpoſition to perſecute?—By whom was Europe deluged with blood in ten ſucceſſive perſecutions during the three firſt centuries?—Were Chriſtians the authors of this?—When the church had ſo far degenerated as to imbibe many of the principles and ſuperſtitions of the heathen, then indeed it began to imitate their perſecuting ſpirit; but not before. When Chriſt's kingdom was transformed into a kingdom of this world, the weapons of its warfare might be expected to become carnal, and to be no longer as formerly, *mighty through God.*

The religious perſecutions among Chriſtians have been compared to the maſſacres attending the French Revolution in the times of Robeſpierre. The horrid barbarities of the latter, it has been ſaid, by way of apology, "have not even been equal to thoſe of the former." If deiſts may be allowed to confound Chriſtianity and Popery, I ſhall not diſpute the juſtneſs of the compariſon.

There is no doubt a great resemblance between the papal and the infidel spirit; or rather they are one. Both are the spirit of this world, which is averse to true religion. The difference between them is but as that between the wolf and the tiger.* But those who reason thus, should prove that the Reformers in religion have been guilty of as great excesses as the deistical Reformers in politics. Were there any such assassinations amongst the Protestants towards one another, or towards the Papists, as have been wantonly committed by infidels? It is true there were examples of persecution amongst Protestants, and such as will ever remain a dishonor to the parties concerned; but those which affected the lives of men were few in number, compared with the other, and those few, censurable as they are, were not performed by assassination.

Mr. *Paine* affirms that "all sects of Christians, except the Quakers, have persecuted in their turn." That much of this spirit has prevailed is too true: but this assertion is unfounded. I could name more denominations than one, whose hands I believe were never stained with blood, and whose avowed principles have always been in favor of universal liberty of conscience.

* The resemblance between Popery and Infidelity is pointed out with great beauty and energy in a piece which has appeared in some of the periodical publications, entitled, *The progress of the Moderns in knowledge, refinement, and virtue.* See *Theol. Mag.* Vol. I. No. V. p. 344. *Ev. Mag.* Vol. IV. p. 405.

But let us enquire into the principles and ſpirit of our adverſaries on this ſubject. It is true that almoſt all their writers have defended the cauſe of liberty, and levelled their cenſures againſt perſecution. But where is the man that is not an enemy to this practice when it is directed againſt himſelf?—Have they diſcovered a proper regard to the rights of conſcience among Chriſtians? This is the queſtion. There may be individuals among them who have; but the generality of their writers diſcover a ſhameful partiality in favor of their own ſide, and a contemptuous diſregard of all who have ſuffered for the name of Chriſt. While they exhibit perſecution in its deſervedly infamous colours, they as conſtantly hold up the perſecuted, *if found among Chriſtians,* in a diſadvantageous point of view. Mr. *Hume* allows that "the perſecutions of Chriſtians in the early ages were cruel;" but lays the blame chiefly on themſelves:* and all through his *Hiſtory of England* he palliates the conduct of the perſecutors, and repreſents the perſecuted in an unfavorable light. The ſame may be ſaid of *Gibbon* in his *Hiſtory of the Decline of the Roman Empire;* of *Shafteſbury* in his *Characteriſtics,* and indeed of the generality of deiſtical writers. *Voltaire,* boaſting of the wiſdom and moderation of the ancient Romans, ſays, "they never perſecuted a ſingle philoſopher for his opinions, from the time

* *Eſſay on Parties in general.*

of Romulus till the popes got poſſeſſion of their power."* But did they not perſecute Chriſtians? The millions of lives that fell a ſacrifice in the firſt three centuries after the Chriſtian Æra, are conſidered as nothing by Voltaire. The benevolence of this apoſtle of deiſm feels not for men if they happen to be believers in Chriſt. If an Ariſtotle, a Pythagoras, or a Galileo ſuffer for their opinions, they are "martyrs:" but if a million of French Proteſtants "from a deſire to bring back things to the primitive inſtitutes of the Church," endure the moſt cruel treatment, or quit their country to eſcape it, they, according to this writer, are "weak and obſtinate men." Say, reader,—Are theſe men friends to religious liberty?—What does all their declamation againſt perſecution amount to but this, that ſuch of them who reſide in chriſtianized countries wiſh to enjoy their opinions without being expoſed to it?

Till of late, deiſts have been in the minority in all the nations of Europe, and have therefore felt the neceſſity of a free enjoyment of opinion. It is not what they have pleaded under thoſe circumſtances, but their conduct when in power, that muſt prove them friends to religious liberty. Few men are known to be what they are, until tried. They and Proteſtant Diſſenters have, in ſome reſpects, been in a ſimilar ſituation. Of late, each, in a different country, have become

* *Ignorant Philoſopher*, p. 82, 83.

the majority, and the civil power has been intruſted in their hands. The deſcendants of the Puritans in the weſtern world, by diſpenſing the bleſſings of liberty even to Epiſcopalians, by whoſe perſecutions their anceſtors were driven from their native ſhores, have ſhewn themſelves worthy of the truſt. But have the deiſts acted thus in France, and other countries which have fallen into their hands? It is true we believe them to have been the inſtruments in the hand of God of deſtroying the papal antichriſt; and in this view we rejoice; howbeit they meant not ſo. If we judge of their proceedings towards the Catholics in the ordinary way of judging of human actions, which undoubtedly we ought, I fear it will be found not only perſecuting, but perfidious and bloody in the extreme.

I am not without hope that liberty of conſcience will be preſerved in France; and if it ſhould, it will be ſeen whether the ſubverſion of the national eſtabliſhment will prove, what the adviſers of that meaſure, without doubt, expected, and what others, who abhorred it, apprehended, the extinction of Chriſtianity. It may prove the reverſe, and iſſue in things which will more than balance all the ills attending the Revolution. Theſe hopes, however are not founded on an idea of the juſt or tolerant ſpirit of infidelity; but, ſo far as human motives are concerned, on that regard to *conſiſtency* which is known to influence all mankind. If the leading men

in France, after having so liberally declaimed against persecution, should ever enact laws in favor of it, or, in violation of the laws, encourage it, they must appear in a most disgraceful light in the opinion of the whole civilized world.

Not only persecution, but *unjust wars, intrigues*, and other mischiefs, are placed to the account of Christianity. That such things have existed, and that men who are called Christians have been deeply concerned in them, is true. Wicked men will act wickedly by whatever name they are called. Whether these things be fairly attributable to the Christian religion, may be determined by a few plain inquiries.

First,—Did these evils commence with Christianity, or have they increased under its influence?—Has not the world, in every age with which history acquaints us, been a scene of corruption, intrigue, tumult, and slaughter?—All that can, with any face, be objected to Christianity is, that these things have continued in the world *notwithstanding* its influence; and that they have been practised in as great a degree by men calling themselves Christians as by any other persons.

Secondly,—Are those who ordinarily engage in these practices real Christians; and do our adversaries themselves account them so? They can distinguish, when they please, between sincere and merely nominal Christians. They need not be told that great num-

bers in every nation are of that religion which happens to prevail at the time; or rather that they are of no religion.

Thirdly,—Have not the courts of princes notwithſtanding Chriſtianity may have been the profeſſed religion of the land, been generally attended by a far greater proportion of deiſts, than of ſerious chriſtians; and have not public meaſures been directed by the counſels of the former much more than by thoſe of the latter?—It is well known that great numbers among the nobility and gentry of every nation conſider religion as ſuited only to vulgar minds; and therefore either wholly abſent themſelves from worſhip, or attend but ſeldom, and then only to ſave appearances towards a national eſtabliſhment by which proviſion is made for the younger branches of their families. In other words they are unbelievers. This is the deſcription of men by which public affairs are commonly managed; and to which the good or the evil pertaining to them, ſo far as human agency is concerned, is to be attributed.

Finally,—Great as have been the evils abounding in nations profeſſing Chriſtianity, (and great they have been, and ought greatly to be deplored) can unbelievers pretend to have given us any hope at preſent of the ſtate of things being meliorated?—It is true they have talked and written much in this way; and many well-wiſhers to the human race have been diſpoſed to give them credit. But it is not words that will prove any thing.

Have they *done* any thing that juſtifies a hope of reformation? No, themſelves muſt firſt be reformed; or rather, to uſe an appropriate term of their own, *regenerated.* Far be it from me that in ſuch a cauſe as this I ſhould write under the influence of national prejudice, or ſide with the enemies of civil and religious freedom: but I muſt ſay, there never was a repreſentation more neceſſary than that which was given in an Addreſs from the Executive Directory of France to the Council of Five Hundred, about the beginning of the year 1796. In this addreſs they "requeſt "the moſt earneſt attention of the Council "towards adopting ſome meaſure for the *re-* "*generation* of the public morals." This is the regeneration wanted, and which, having rejected Chriſtianity, they may be ever ſeeking, but will never be able to obtain. They may continue to revolutionize as long as a party ſhall be found that wiſhes for an increaſe of power, and perceives an opportunity of gaining it; and every party, in its turn, may talk of "ſaving liberty:" but never will they be *free indeed* until they are emancipated in ſome good degree from the dominion of vice: and never will this be effected but by a knowledge of evangelical truth.

The friends of legitimate liberty have deeply to regret, that under that revered name has been perpetrated almoſt every ſpecies of atrocity; and that not only towards individuals, but nations, and nations the moſt peace-

able and inoffenfive, whofe only crime was that of being unable to refift. Liberty has fuffered more from the hands of infidels, amidft all their fucceffes and declamations, than from its profeffed enemies; and ftill it bleeds beneath their wounds. Without entering into political difputes, I may fafely affirm, that if ever the nations of the earth be bleffed with equal liberty, it will be by the prevalence, not of the pretended illuminations of infidel philofophy, but of that doctrine which teaches us to *do unto others as we would that others fhould do unto us.*

Finally,—Mr. *Paine* affirms, that men, by becoming deifts, would "live more conſiſtently and morally than by any other fyftem." As to living more *conſiſtently*, it is poffible there may be fome truth in it: for the beft Chriftians, it muft be allowed, have many imperfections, which are but fo many inconſiſtencies; whereas by complying with this advice, they would be uniformly wicked.—And as to their living more *morally*, if Mr. Paine could coin a new fyftem of morals, from which the love of God fhould be excluded, and intemperance, incontinency, pride, profane fwearing, curfing, lying, and hypocricy exalted to the rank of virtues, he might very probably make good his aſſertion.

Mr. *Paine* profeffes to "deteft the Bible on account of its obfcene ftories, voluptuous debaucheries, cruel executions, and unrelenting vindictiveneſs,"* That the Bible re-

* *Age of Reaſon*, Part I. p. 12.

lates ſuch things, is true: and every impartial hiſtory of mankind muſt do the ſame. The queſtion is, Whether they be ſo related as to leave a favorable impreſſion of them upon the mind of a ſerious reader. If ſo, and if the Bible be that immoral book which Mr. Paine repreſents it to be, how it that the reading of it ſhould have reclaimed millions from immorality? Whether he will acknowledge this, or not, it is a fact too notorious to be denied by impartial obſervers. Every man reſiding in a Chriſtian country will acknowledge, unleſs he have an end to anſwer in ſaying otherwiſe, that thoſe people who read the Bible, believe its doctrines, and endeavor to form their lives by its precepts, are the moſt ſober, upright, and uſeful members of the community: and that thoſe, on the other hand, who diſcredit the Bible, and renounce it as the rule of their lives, are, generally ſpeaking, addicted to the groſſeſt vices; ſuch as profane ſwearing, lying, drunkenneſs, and lewdneſs. It is very ſingular, I repeat it, that men, by regarding an immoral book, ſhould learn to practiſe morality; and that others, by diſregarding it, ſhould learn the contrary.

How is it, that in countries where Chriſtianity has made progreſs, men have almoſt univerſally agreed in reckoning a true Chriſtian, and an amiable, open, modeſt, chaſte, conſcientious, and benevolent character, as the ſame thing? How is it, alſo, that to ſay of a man "he rejects the Bible," is nearly

the ſame thing, in the account of people in general, as to ſay, he is a man of a diſſolute life? If there were not a general connexion between theſe things. public opinion would not ſo generally aſſociate them. Individuals, and even parties, may be governed by prejudice; but public opinion of character is ſeldom far from the truth. Beſides, the prejudices of merely nominal Chriſtians, ſo far as my obſervation extends, are equally ſtrong, if not ſtronger, againſt thoſe Chriſtians who are diſtinguiſhed by their devout and ſerious regard to the ſcriptures, than againſt profeſſed infidels. How is it, then, to be accountfor, that although they will call them fanatics, enthuſiaſts, and other unpleaſant names, yet it is very rare that they reckon them immoral? If, as is ſometimes the caſe, they accuſe them of unworthy motives, and inſinuate that in ſecret they are as wicked as others, either ſuch inſinuations are not ſeriouſly believed, or, if they be, the party is conſidered as inſincere in his profeſſion. No man thinks that genuine Chriſtianity conſiſts with a wicked life, open or ſecret. But the ideas of infidelity and immorality are aſſociated in the public mind; and the aſſociation is clear and ſtrong; ſo much ſo, as to become a ground of action. Whom do men ordinarily chooſe for Umpires, Truſtees, Guardians, and the like? Doubtleſs they endeavor to ſelect perſons of intelligence: but if to this be added *Chriſtian principle*, is it not of weight in theſe caſes?

It is ſeldom known, I believe, but that a ſerious intelligent Chriſtian, whoſe ſituation in the world renders him converſant with its concerns, will have his hands full of employment. Aſk bankers, merchants, tradesmen, and others, who are frequently looking out for perſons of probity whom they may place in ſituations of truſt, in whoſe hands they would chuſe to confide their property? They might object, and with good reaſon, to perſons whoſe religion rendered them pert, conceited and idle; but would they not prefer one who really makes the Bible the rule of his life, to one who profeſſedly rejects it? The common practice in theſe caſes affords a ſufficient anſwer.

How is it that the principles and reaſonings of infidels, though frequently accompanied with great natural and acquired abilities, are ſeldom known to make any impreſſion on ſober people? Is it not becauſe the men and their communications are known?*

* It is ſaid of a Gentleman lately deceaſed, who was eminent in the literary world, that in early life he drank deeply into the free-thinking ſcheme. He and one of his companions, of the ſame turn of mind, often carried on their converſations in the hearing of a religious, but illiterate countryman. —This gentleman, afterwards becoming a ſerious Chriſtian was concerned for the countryman, leſt his faith in the Chriſtian Religion ſhould have been ſhaken. One day he took the liberty, to aſk him, Whether what had ſo frequently been advanced in his hearing had not produced this effect upon him? —By no means, anſwered the countryman, it never made the leaſt impreſſion upon me. No impreſſion upon you, ſaid the gentleman! Why, you muſt know that we had read and tho't on theſe things much more than you had any opportunity of doing. O yes, ſaid the other, but I knew alſo your manner of living: I knew that to maintain ſuch a courſe of conduct, you found it *neceſſary* to renounce Chriſtianity.

How is it that ſo much is made of the falls of Noah, Lot, David, Jonah, Peter, and others? The ſame things in heathen philoſophers, or modern unbelievers, would be paſſed over without notice. All the declamations of our adverſaries on theſe ſubjects plainly prove that ſuch inſtances with us are more *ſingular* than with them. With us they are occaſional, and afford matter for deep repentance; and with them they are habitual, and furniſh employment in the work of palliation. The ſpots on the garments of a child attract attention; but the filthy condition of the animal that wallows in the mire is diſregarded, as being a thing of courſe.

The morality, ſuch as it is, which is found among deiſts, amounts to nothing more than a little exterior decorum. The criminality of *intention* is expreſsly diſowned.* The great body of theſe writers pretend to no higher motives than a regard to their ſafety, intereſt, or reputation. Actions proceeding from theſe principles muſt not only be deſtitute of virtue, but wretchedly defective as to their influence on the well-being of ſociety. If the heart be towards God, a ſober, righteous, and godly life becomes a matter of choice: but that which is performed, not for its own ſake, but from fear, intereſt, or ambition, will extend no farther than the eye of man can follow it. In domeſtic life it will be but little regarded; and in retirement not

* Volney's *Law of Nature*, p. 18.

at all. Such, in fact, is the character of infidels. "Will you dare to affert," fays *Linguet*, a French writer, in an addrefs to *Voltaire*, "that it is in philofophic families we "are to look for models of filial refpect, con- "jugal love, fincerity in friendfhip, or fide- "lity among domeftics? Were you difpos- "ed to do fo, would not your own confci- "ence, your own experience, fuppref's the "falfehood, even before your lips could ut- "ter it?"*

"Wherever fociety is eftablifhed there "it is neceffary to have religion: for reli- "gion, which watches over the crimes that "are fecret, is, in fact, the only law which a "man carries about with him; the only one "which places the punifhment at the fide "of the guilt; and which operates as forci- "bly in folitude and darknefs, as in the "broad and open face of day." Would the reader have thought it? Thefe are the words of Voltaire!†

Nothing is more common than for deifti- cal writers to level their artillery againft the *Chriftian miniftry*. Under the appellation of *prieft*s, they feem to think themfelves at liberty to load them with every fpecies of abufe. That there are great numbers of worldly men who have engaged in the Chriftian miniftry, as other worldly men engage in o-

* *Linguet* was an admirer of Voltaire; but difapproved of his oppofition to Chriftianity. See his *Review* of that author's Works, p. 264.

† In Sullivan's *Survey of Nature*.

ther employments, for the ſake of profit, is true; and where this is the caſe, it may be expected that hunting, gaming, and ſuch kind of amuſements, will be their favorite purſuits, while religious exerciſes will be performed as a piece of neceſſary drudgery.—Where this is the caſe, "their devotion "muſt be feigned, and their ſerioufneſs mere "hypocriſy and grimace." But that this ſhould be repreſented as a general caſe, and that the miniſtry itſelf ſhould be reproached on account of the hypocriſy of worldly men who intrude themſelves into it, can only be owing to malignity. Let the fulleſt ſubtraction be made of characters of the above deſcription, and I appeal to impartial obſervation whether there will not ſtill remain, in only this particular order of Chriſtians, and at almoſt any period, a greater number of ſerious, upright, diſintereſted, and benevolent perſons, than could be found amongſt the whole body of deiſts in a ſucceſſion of centuries.

It is worthy of notice that Mr. *Hume*, in attempting to plunge Chriſtian miniſters into the mire of reproach, is obliged to deſcend himſelf, and to drag all mankind with him, into the ſame ſituation. He repreſents miniſters as drawn from the common maſs "of mankind, as people are to other em-"ployments by the views of profit;" and ſuggeſts, that "therefore they are obliged, "on many occaſions, to feign more devo-"tion than they poſſeſs," which is friendly

to hypocrify.* The leading motives of all public officers, it ſeems, is to aggrandize themſelves. If Mr. *Hume*, had accepted of a ſtation under government, we can be at no loſs, therefore, in judging what would have been his predominant principle. How weak, as well as wicked, muſt that man have been, who, in order to wound the reputation of one deſcription of men, could point his arrows againſt the integrity of all! But the world muſt forgive him. He had no ill deſign againſt them, any more than againſt himſelf. It was for the purpoſe of deſtroying theſe philiſtines, that he has aimed to demoliſh the temple of human virtue.

Nor is his antipathy, or that of his brethren, at all to be wondered at: Theſe are the men who, in every age, have expoſed the ſophiſtry of deiſts, and vindicated Chriſtianity from their malicious aſperſions. It is reaſonable to ſuppoſe, therefore, that they will always be conſidered as their natural enemies. It is no more a matter of ſurpriſe that they ſhould be the objects of their invective, than that the weapons of nightly depredators ſhould be pointed againſt the watchmen, whoſe buſineſs it is to detect them, and expoſe their nefarious practices.

After all, Mr. Hume pretends to reſpect "*Clergymen*, who are ſet apart by the laws "to the care of ſacred matters;" and wiſhes to be underſtood as directing his cenſures

* *Eſſay on National Characters*, Note.

only againſt *prieſts*, or thoſe who pretend to power and dominion, and to a ſuperior ſanctity of character, diſtinct from virtue and good morals.* It ſhould ſeem, then, that they are *diſſenting* miniſters only that incur Mr. Hume's diſpleaſure; but if, as he repreſents them, they be "drawn to their employment by the views of profit," they certainly cannot poſſeſs the common underſtanding of men, ſince they could ſcarcely purſue an occupation leſs likely to accompliſh their deſign. The truth is, Mr. Hume did not mean to cenſure diſſenting miniſters only; nor did he feel any reſpect to clergymen ſet apart by the laws. Thoſe whom he meant to ſpare were ſuch clergymen as were men after his own heart; and the objects of his diſlike were truly evangelical miniſters, whether churchmen or diſſenters, who were not ſatisfied with *his* kind of morality, but were men of holy lives, and conſequently were reſpected by the people. Theſe are the men againſt whom the enmity of deiſts has ever been directed. As to other prieſts, they have no other difference with them than that of rivalſhip, wiſhing to poſſeſs their wealth and influence, which the others are not always the moſt willing to relinquiſh. In profeſſing, however, to "reſpect" ſuch clergymen, Mr. Hume only means to flatter them, and draw them on to a little nearer alliance with his views. Reſpect is excited only by

* *Eſſays Mor. and Polit.* Eſ. XII. p. 107, 108, Note.

conſiſtency of character, and is frequently involuntary. A clergyman of looſe morals may be preferred, and his company courted, but *reſpected* he cannot be.

As to thoſe miniſters againſt whom Mr. Hume levels his artillery, and againſt whom the real enmity of his party has always been directed, there is not a body of men in the world, of equal talents and induſtry, who receive leſs, if ſo little, for their labors. If thoſe who have ſo liberally accuſed them of intereſted motives gained no more by their exertions than the accuſed, they would not be ſo wealthy as many of them are.

Compare the conduct of the leading men among deiſts with that of the body of ſerious Chriſtian divines. Amidſt their declamations againſt prieſtly hypocriſy, are they honeſt men? Where is their ingenuouſneſs in continually confounding Chriſtianity and Popery? Have theſe workers of iniquity no knowledge? 'No,' ſay ſome, 'they do not 'underſtand the difference between genuine 'and corrupted Chriſtianity. They have ne-'ver had opportunity of viewing the reli-'gion of Jeſus in its native dreſs. It is po-'piſh ſuperſtition againſt which their efforts 'are directed. If they underſtood Chriſtian-'ity they would embrace it.' Indeed? And was this the caſe with Shaftesbury, Bolingbroke, Hume, or Gibbon? or is this the caſe with Paine? No, they have both ſeen and hated the light; nor will they come to it, leſt their deeds ſhould be made manifeſt.

It may be thought, however, that ſome excuſe may be made for infidels reſiding in a popiſh country; and this I ſhall not diſpute, as it reſpects the ignorant populace, who may be carried away by their leaders: but as it reſpects the leaders themſelves, it is otherwiſe. The National Aſſembly of France, when they wiſhed to counteract the prieſts, and to reject the adoption of the Roman Catholic faith as the eſtabliſhed Religion, could clearly diſtinguiſh between genuine and corrupted Chriſtianity.* Deiſts can diſtinguiſh between Chriſtianity and its abuſes, when an end is to be anſwered by it; and when an end is to be anſwered by it, they can, with equal facility, confound them.

" Herbert, Hobbes, Shafteſbury, Wools-
" ton, Tindal, Chubb, and Bolingbroke are
" all guilty of the vile hypocriſy of profeſs-
" ing to love and reverence Chriſtianity,
" while they are employed in no other de-
" ſign than to deſtroy it. Such faithleſs pro-
" feſſions, ſuch groſs violations of truth, in
" Chriſtians, would have been proclaimed
" to the univerſe by theſe very writers as in-
" famous deſertions of principle and decen-
" cy. Is it leſs infamous in themſelves? All
" hypocriſy is deteſtable; but I know of
" none ſo deteſtable as that which is coolly
" written, with full premeditation, by a man
" of talents, aſſuming the character of a mo-
" ral and religious inſtructor. Truth is a

* *Mirabeau's Speeches*, Vol. II. p. 269—274.

" virtue perfectly defined, mathematically
" clear, and completely underſtood by all
" men of common ſenſe. There can be no
" haltings between uttering truth and falſe-
" hood, no doubt, no miſtakes, as between
" piety and enthuſiaſm, frugality and parſi-
" mony, generoſity and profuſion. Trans-
" greſſion therefore is always a known, de-
" finite, deliberate villainy. In the ſudden
" moment of ſtrong temptation, in the hour
" of unguarded attack, in the flutter and tre-
" pidation of unexpected alarm, the beſt man
" may, perhaps, be ſurpriſed into any ſin:
" but he who can coolly, of ſteady deſign, and
" with no unuſual impulſe, utter falſehood,
" and vend hypocriſy, is not far from finiſh-
" ed depravity."

" The morals of *Rocheſter* and *Wharton*
" need no comment. *Woolſton* was a groſs
" blaſphemer. *Blount* ſolicited his ſiſter-in-
" law to marry him, and being refuſed, ſhot
" himſelf. *Tindal* was originally a proteſ-
" tant, then turned papiſt, then proteſtant a-
" gain, merely to ſuit the times; and was at
" the ſame time infamous for vice in gener-
" al, and the total want of principle. He is
" ſaid to have died with this prayer in his
" mouth, 'If there be a God, I deſire that
" he may have mercy on me.' *Hobbes* wrote
" his *Leviathan* to ſerve the cauſe of Charles
" I. but finding him fail of ſucceſs, he turn-
" ed it to the defence of Cromwell, and
" made a merit of this fact to the uſurper:
" as *Hobbes* himſelf unbluſhingly declared

" to Lord Clarendon. *Morgan* had no re-
" gard to truth, as is evident from his nu-
" merous falſifications of ſcripture, as well
" as from the vile hypocriſy of profeſſing
" himſelf a Chriſtian in thoſe very writings
" in which he labors to deſtroy Chriſtianity.
" *Voltaire* in a Letter now remaining, re-
" queſted his friend D'Alembert to tell for
" him a direct and palpable lie, by denying
" that he was the author of the Philoſophi-
" cal Dictionary. D'Alembert, in his anſwer,
" informed him that he had told the lie.—
" Voltaire has indeed expreſſed his own mo-
" ral character perfectly in the following
" words: 'Monſieur Abbe, I muſt be read,
" no matter whether I am believed or not.'
" He alſo ſolemnly profeſſed to believe the
" Catholic Religion, although, at the ſame
" time, he doubted the exiſtence of a God.
" *Hume* died as a fool dieth. The day be-
" fore his death he ſpent in a pitiful and af-
" fected unconcern about this tremendous
" ſubject, playing at whiſt, reading Lucian's
" Dialogues, and making ſilly attempts at
" wit, concerning his interview with Charon
" the heathen ferry-man of hades."*

Collins, though he had no belief in Chriſtianity, yet qualified himſelf for civil office by partaking of the Lord's Supper. *Shaftesbury* did the ſame; and the ſame is done by

* The two laſt paragraphs are taken from Dr. *Dwight*'s excellent Diſcourſes on *The nature and danger of Infidel Philoſophy*, p. 45—47.

hundreds of infidels to this day. Yet these are the men who are continually declaiming againſt the hypocriſy of prieſts! *Godwin* is not only a lewd character, by his own confeſſion, but the unblufhing advocate of lewdneſs. And as to *Paine*, he is well known to have been a profane fwearer, and a drunkard. We have evidence upon oath that "Religion was his favorite topic when intoxicated;* "and, from the ſcurrility of the performance, it is not improbable that he was frequently in this ſituation while writing his *Age of Reaſon*.

I ſhall conclude this catalogue of worthies, with a brief abſtract of the *Confeſſions of J. J. Rouſſeau*. After a good education, in the Proteſtant religion, he was put apprentice. Finding his ſituation diſagreeable to him, he felt a ſtrong propenſity to vice; inclining him to covet, diſſemble, lie, and at length to ſteal; a propenſity of which he was never able afterwards to diveſt himſelf. "I have been a Rogue," ſays he, "and am ſo ſtill ſometimes, for trifles which I had rather take than aſk for."†

He abjured the Proteſtant religion, and entered the hoſpital of the Catechumens at *Turin*, to be inſtructed in that of the Catholics; "for which in return, ſays he, I was to receive ſubſiſtence. From this intereſted converſion he adds, nothing remained but

* See *Trial of T. Paine, at Guild Hall for a Libel, &c.* p. 43.

† *Confeſſions, London Ed.* 1796, Vol. I. pp. 52, 55, 68.

the remembrance of my having been both a dupe and an apoſtate."†

After this he reſided with a *Madame de Warrens*, with whom "he lived in the greateſt poſſible familiarity." This lady often ſuggeſted that there would be no juſtice in the Supreme Being, ſhould he be ſtrictly juſt to us; becauſe, not having beſtowed what was neceſſary to render us eſſentially good, it would be requiring more than he had given. She was nevertheleſs a very good Catholic, or pretended at leaſt to be one, and certainly deſired to be ſuch. If there had been no chriſtian morality eſtabliſhed, Rouſſeau ſuppoſes ſhe would have lived as though regulated by its principles. All her morality however was ſubordinate to the principles of M. *Tavel*, (who firſt ſeduced her from conjugal fidelity by urging, in effect, that *expoſure* was the only crime) or rather ſhe ſaw nothing in religion that contradicted them. Rouſſeau was far enough from being of this opinion: yet he confeſſed he dared not combat the arguments of the lady: nor is it ſuppoſable he could, as he appears to have been acting on the ſame principles at the time. "Finding in *her*, he adds, all thoſe ideas *I had occaſion for* to ſecure me from the fears of death, and its future conſequences, I drew confidence and ſecurity from this ſource."*

The writings of Port Royal, and thoſe of

† pp. 125, 126.

* Vol. II. pp. 88, 89, 103—106.

the Oratory, made him half a Janseniſt; and notwithſtanding all his confidence, their harſh theory ſometimes alarmed him. A dread of hell, which till then he had never much apprehended, by little and little diſturbed his ſecurity, and had not *Madame de Warrens* tranquilized his ſoul, would at length have been too much for him. His Confeſſor alſo, a Jeſuit, contributed all in his power to keep up his hopes.*

After this he became familiar with another female, *Thereſa*. He began by declaring to her that he would never either abandon or marry her. Finding her pregnant with her firſt child, and hearing it obſerved in an eating-houſe that *he who had beſt filled the foundling Hoſpital was always the moſt applauded*, "I ſaid to myſelf, quoth he, ſince "it is the cuſtom of the country, they who "live here may adopt it. I cheerfully deter- "mined upon it without the leaſt ſcruple; "and the only one I had to overcome was "that of Thereſa; whom with the greateſt "imaginable difficulty, I perſuaded to com- "ply." The year following, a ſimilar inconvenience was remedied by the ſame expedient: no more reflection on his part, nor approbation on that of the mother. "She obliged with trembling. My fault, ſays he, was great; but it was an error."†

He reſolved on ſettling at Geneva; and

* Vol. II. p. 127.

† Part II. Vol. I. pp. 123, 154, 155, 183, 187, 315.

on going thither, and being mortified at his exclusion from the rights of a citizen by the profession of a religion different from his forefathers, he determined openly to return to the latter. "I thought, says he, the gos-"pel being the same for every Christian, and "the only difference in religious opinions "the result of the explanations given by "men to that which they did not under-"stand, it was the exclusive right of the so-"vereign power in every country to fix the "mode of worship, and these unintelligible "opinions; and that consequently it was "the duty of a citizen to admit the one, and "conform to the other, in the manner pre-"scribed by the law." Accordingly at Geneva he renounced popery.*

After passing twenty years with Theresa, he made her his wife. He appears to have intrigued with a Madame de H——. Of his desires after that lady he says, "Guilty without remorse, I soon became so without measure."†

Such, according to his own account, was the life of uprightness and honor which was to expiate for a theft which he had committed when a young man, and laid it to a female servant, by which she lost her place and character.§ Such was Rousseau, the man whom the rulers of the French nation have delighted to honour; and who for writing

* Part II. Vol. I. pp. 263, 264.
† pp, 311, 378.
§ Vol. I. pp. 155, 160.

this account, had the vanity and presumption to expect the applause of his Creator. "Whenever the last trumpet shall sound, "saith he, I will present myself before the "sovereign Judge, with this book in my "hand, and loudly proclaim, thus have I "acted—these were my thoughts—such was "I. Power eternal! Assemble round thy "throne the innumerable throng of my fel-"low-mortals. Let them listen to my Con-"fessions, let them blush at my depravity, "let them tremble at my sufferings, let each "in his turn expose with equal sincerity the "failings, the wanderings of his heart; and if "he dare, aver, I was better than that "man."*

* Vol. I. p. 1.

CHAP. VI.

Chriſtianity has not only produced good effects in thoſe who cordially believe it, but has given to the morals of ſociety at large, a tone, which Deiſm ſo far as it operates, goes to counteract.

NO man walks through life without a rule of ſome kind, by which his conduct is directed, and his inclinations reſtrained.—They who fear not God are influenced by a regard to the opinions of men. To avoid the cenſure, and gain the applauſe of the public, is the ſummit of their ambition.

Public opinion has an influence not only on the conduct of individuals in a community, but on the formation of its laws. Legiſlators will not only conform their ſyſtems to what the humours of the people will bear, but will themſelves incline to omit thoſe virtues which are the moſt ungrateful, and to ſpare thoſe vices which are moſt agreeable.

Nor is this all! ſo great is the influence of public opinion. that it will direct the conduct of a community againſt its own laws. There are obſolete ſtatutes, as we all know, the breach of which cannot be puniſhed: and even ſtatutes which are not obſolete, where they operate againſt this principle, have but little effect; witneſs the con-

nivance at the atrocious practice of duelling.

Now if public opinion be so potent a principle, whatever has a prevailing influence in forming it, must give a decided tone to what are considered as the morals of a nation. I say *to what are considered* as the morals of a nation: for strictly speaking, so much of the love of God and man, as prevails in a nation, so much morality is there in it, and no more. But as we can judge of love only by its expressions. we call those actions moral, though it is possible, their morality may be only counterfeit, by which the love of God and man is ordinarily expressed. If we perform those actions which are the ordinary expressions of love, from some other motive. our good deeds are thereby rendered evil in the sight of him who views things as they are: nevertheless what we do, may be equally beneficial to society as though we acted from the purest motive. In this indirect way, Christianity has operated more than any thing that has been called by the name of religion, or by any other name, towards meliorating the state of mankind.

It has been observed, and with great propriety, that in order to know what religion has done for an individual, we must consider what he would have been without it. The same may be said of a nation, or of the world. What would the nations of Europe have been at this time. if it had not been for the introduction of Christianity? It cannot reasonably be pretended that they would

have been in any better ſituation, as to morality, than that which they were in previous to this event: for there is no inſtance of any people having by their own efforts emerged from idolatry, and the immoralities which attend it. Now as to what that ſtate was, ſome notice has been taken already, ſo far as relates to the principles and lives of the old philoſophers. To this I ſhall add a brief review of the ſtate of ſociety amongſt them.

Great praiſes are beſtowed by Plutarch on the cuſtoms and manners of the *Lacedemonians*. Yet the ſame writer acknowledges that *theft* was encouraged in their children by a law; and that to "ſharpen their wits, "to render them crafty and ſubtle, and to "train them up in all ſorts of wiles and cun-"ning, watchfulneſs, and circumſpection, "whereby they were more apt to ſerve them "in their wars, which was upon the matter "the whole profeſſion of this Common-"wealth. And if at any time they were ta-"ken in the act of ſtealing, they were moſt "certainly puniſhed with rods, and the pe-"nance of faſting; not becauſe they eſteem-"ed the ſtealth criminal, but becauſe they "wanted ſkill and cunning in the manage-"ment and conduct of it.* Hence, as might be expected, and as Herodotus obſerves, their actions were generally contrary to their

* *Plutarch's Morals*, Vol. I. p. 96.

words; and there was no dependance upon them in any matter.

As to their *chaſtity*, there were common baths in which the men and women bathed together: and it was ordered that the young maidens ſhould appear naked in the public exerciſes, as well as the young men, and that they ſhould dance naked with them at the ſolemn feſtivals and ſacrifices. Huſbands alſo were allowed to impart the uſe of their wives to handſome and deſerving men, in order to the producing of healthy and vigorous children for the Commonwealth.

Children which were deformed, or of a bad conſtitution were *murdered*. This inhuman cuſtom was common all over Greece; ſo much ſo that it was reckoned a ſingular thing among the Thebans, that the law forbad any Theban to expoſe his infant, under pain of death. This practice, with that of procuring abortion, were encouraged by Plato and Ariſtotle.

The unnatural *love of boys* was ſo common in Greece, that in many places it was ſanctioned by the public laws, of which Ariſtotle gives the reaſon, viz. to prevent their having too many children. *Maximus Tyrius*, celebrates it as a moſt ſingular heroic act of Ageſilaus, that being in love with a beautiful barbarian boy, he ſuffered it to go no farther than looking at him, and admiring him. *Epictetus* alſo praiſes Socrates in this manner: "Go to Socrates, and ſee him lying by "Alcibiades, yet ſlighting his youth and

" beauty. Conſider what a victory he was " conſcious of obtaining! What an Olym- " pic prize! So that, by heaven, one might " juſtly ſalute him, Hail incredibly great, u- " niverſal victor!" What an implication does ſuch language contain of the manners of thoſe times!

The *Romans* were allowed by Romulus to deſtroy all their female children, except the eldeſt: and even with regard to their male children, if they were deformed, or monſtrous, he permitted the parents to expoſe them, after having ſhewn them to five of their neareſt neighbors. Such things were in common uſe amongſt them, and were celebrated upon their theatres.

Such was their *cruelty* to their ſlaves, that it was not unuſual for the maſters to put ſuch of them as were old, ſick, and infirm, into an iſland in the Tiber, where they left them to periſh. So far did ſome of them carry their luxury and wantonneſs as to drown them in the fiſh-ponds, that they might be devoured by the fiſh, to make the fleſh more delicate!

Gladiatory ſhows were common amongſt them; in which a number of ſlaves were engaged to fight for the diverſion of the multitude, till each one ſlew or was ſlain by his antagoniſt. Of theſe brutiſh exerciſes the people were extremely fond; even the women ran eagerly after them, taking pleaſure in ſeeing the combatants kill one another, deſirous only that they ſhould fall genteely,

or in an agreeable attitude! They were exhibited at the funerals of great and rich men, and on many other occaſions: So frequent did they become, that no war, it is ſaid, caused ſuch ſlaughter of mankind as did theſe ſports of pleaſure, throughout the ſeveral provinces of the Roman empire.

That odious and *unnatural* vice, which prevailed among the Greeks, was alſo common amongſt the Romans. *Cicero* introduces, without any mark of diſapprobation, Cotta, a man of the firſt rank and genius, freely and familiarly owning to other Romans of the ſame quality, that worſe than beaſtly vice as practiſed by himſelf, and quoting the authorities of ancient philoſophers in vindication of it. It appears alſo from *Seneca*, that in his time it was practiſed at Rome openly and without ſhame. He ſpeaks of flocks and troops of boys, diſtinguiſhed by their colours and nations, and that great care was taken to train them up for that deteſtable employment.

The religious rites performed in honor of Venus in *Cyprus*, and at *Aphac* on Mount Libanus, conſiſted in lewdneſs of the groſſeſt kinds. The young people of both ſexes crowded from all parts to thoſe ſinks of pollution, and filling the groves and temples with their ſhameleſs practices, committed whoredom by thouſands, out of pure devotion.

All the *Babylonian* women were obliged to proſtitute themſelves once in their lives,

at the temple of Venus or Mylitta, to the firſt man that aſked them: and the money earned by this means was always eſteemed ſacred.

Human ſacrifices were offered up in almoſt all heathen countries. Children were burnt alive, by their own parents, to *Baal*, *Moloch*, and other deities. The *Carthaginians*, in times of public calamity, not only burnt alive the children of the beſt families to *Saturn*, and that by hundreds, but ſometimes ſacrificed themſelves in the ſame manner in great numbers. Here in *Britain*, and in *Gaul*, it was a common practice to ſurround a man with a kind of wicker work, and burn him to death, in honor of their gods.*

In addition to the above, Mr. *Hume* has written as follows; "What cruel tyrants "were the Romans over the world during "the time of their Commonwealth!—It is "true they had laws, to prevent oppreſſion "in their provincial Magiſtrates; but Cicero informs us, that the Romans could not "better conſult the intereſt of the provinces "than by repealing theſe very laws. For in "that caſe, ſays he, our Magiſtrates having "entire impunity, would plunder no more "than would ſatisfy their own rapaciouſneſs; "whereas at preſent they muſt alſo ſatisfy

* The authorities on which this brief ſtatement of facts is founded may be ſeen in Dr. *Leland's advantages and Neceſſity of the Chriſtian Revelation*, Vol. II. Part II. Chap. III, IV. where the ſubject is more particularly handled. See alſo *Deiſm Revealed*, Vol. I. p. 77, 78.

" that of their judges, and of all the great
" men of Rome, of whoſe protection they
" ſtand in need."

The ſame writer, who certainly was not prejudiced againſt them, ſpeaking of their Commonwealth, in its more early times, farther obſerves, " The moſt illuſtrious period
" of the Roman hiſtory, conſidered in a
" political view, is that between the be-
" ginning of the firſt, and end of the laſt
" PUNIC war; yet at this very time the hor-
" rid practice of *poiſoning* was ſo common,
" that during part of a ſeaſon, a Prætor pun-
" iſhed capitally for this crime above *three*
" *thouſand* perſons, in a part of Italy; and
" found informations of this nature ſtill mul-
" tiplying upon him! So depraved in pri-
" vate life, adds Mr. *Hume*, " were that peo-
" ple, whom in their hiſtory we ſo much ad-
" mire."*

From the foregoing facts we may form ſome judgment of the juſtice of Mr. *Paine's* remarks. " We know nothing," ſays he, " of
" what the ancient Gentile world was be-
" fore the time of the Jews, whoſe practice
" has been to calumniate and blacken the
" character of all other nations.—As far as
" we know to the contrary, they were a juſt
" and moral people, and not addicted, like
" the Jews, to cruelty and revenge, but
" of whoſe profeſſion of faith we are unac-
" quainted. It appears to have been their

* *Eſſay on Politics and Science.*

" cuſtom to perſonify both virtue and vice " by ſtatues and images, as is done now a- " days by ſtatuary and painting: but it does " not follow from this that they worſhipped " them any more than we do."*

Unleſs heathens, before the time of the Jews, were totally different from what they were in all after ages, there can be no reaſonable doubt of their worſhipping a plurality of deities, of which images were ſuppoſed to be the repreſentations. Mr. Paine himſelf allows, and that in the ſame performance, that prior to the Chriſtian æra they were " Idolators, and had twenty or thirty thouſand gods."† Yet by his manner of ſpeaking in this place, he manifeſtly wiſhes to inſinuate, in behalf of *all* the heathen nations, that they might worſhip idols no more than we do. It might be worth while for this writer, methinks, to beſtow a little more attention to the improvement of his memory.

With reſpect to their being " juſt and moral people," unleſs they were extremely different, before the time of the Jews, from what they were in all after ages, there can be no reaſonable doubt of their being what the ſacred writers have repreſented them.— If thoſe writers have ſaid nothing worſe of them than has been ſaid by the moſt early and authentic hiſtorians from amongſt themſelves, it will be eaſy for an impartial reader to decide whether heathens have been

* *Age of Reaſon*, Part II. p. 39, 40. † Page 5.

"calumniated and blackened" by the Jewiſh writers, or the Jewiſh writers by Mr. Paine.

But it is not by the ſtate of the *ancient* heathens only that we diſcover the importance of Chriſtianity. A large part of the world is ſtill in the ſame condition; and the ſame immoralities abound amongſt them which are reported to have abounded amongſt the Greeks and Romans.

I am aware that deiſtical writers have labored to hold up the modern as well as the ancient heathens in a very favorable light. In various anonymous publications much is ſaid of their ſimplicity and virtue. One of them ſuggeſts, that the Chineſe are ſo "ſu-
"perior to Chriſtians in relation to moral
"virtues, that it may ſeem neceſſary that they
"ſhould ſend miſſionaries to teach us the uſe
"and practice of Natural Theology, as we
"ſend miſſionaries to them to teach them
"Revealed Religion."* Yea, and ſome who wiſh to rank as Chriſtians, have, on this ground, objected to all miſſionary undertakings among the heathen. Let us examine this matter a little cloſely.

Almoſt all the accounts which are favorable to heathen virtue are either written by the adverſaries of Chriſtianity, and with a deſign to diſparage it; or by navigators, and travellers, who have touched at particular places, and made their reports according to the treatment they have met with, rather

* *Chriſtianity as old as the Creation*, p. 366, 367.

than from a regard to univerſal righteouſneſs. An authentic report of the morals of a people requires to be given, not from a tranſient viſit, but from a continued reſidence amongſt them; not from their occaſional treatment of a ſtranger, but from their general character; and not from having an end to anſwer, but with a rigid regard to truth.

It is worthy of notice, that the far greater part of theſe repreſentations reſpect people with whom we have little or no acquaintance; and therefore are leſs liable to contradiction, whatever the truth may be. As to China, Hindoſtan, and ſome other parts of the world, with whoſe moral ſtate we have had the means of acquiring ſome conſiderable degree of knowledge, the praiſes beſtowed on them by our adverſaries have proved to be unfounded. From the accounts of thoſe who have reſided in China, there does not ſeem to be much reaſon to boaſt of their virtue. On the contrary, their morals appear to be full as bad as thoſe of the ancient heathens. It is allowed they take great care of their outward behavior, more than, perhaps, is taken in any other part of the world beſides; that whatever they do or ſay is ſo contrived that it may have a good appearance, pleaſe all, and offend none; and that they excel in outward modeſty, gravity, good words, courteſy, and civility. But notwithſtanding this, it is ſaid that the ſin againſt nature is extremely common—that drunkenneſs is conſidered as no crime—that

every one takes as many concubines as he can keep—that many of the common people pawn their wives in time of need; and some lend them for a month, or more, or less, according as they agree—that marriage is dissolved on the most trifling occasions—that sons and daughters are sold whenever their parents please, and that is frequently—that many of the rich as well as the poor, when they are delivered of daughters, stifle and kill them—that those who are more tender-hearted will leave them under a vessel, where they expire in great misery—and finally, that notwithstanding this, they all, except the learned, plead humanity and compassion against killing other living creatures, thinking it a cruel thing to take that life which they cannot give. *Montesquieu* says, "The Chinese, whose whole life is governed by the established rites, are the most void "of common honesty of any people upon "earth; and that the laws, tho' they do not "allow them to rob or to spoil by violence, "yet permit them to cheat and defraud."—With this agrees the account given of them in Lord *Anson's* Voyages, and by other navigators, that lying, cheating, stealing, and all the little arts of chicanery abound amongst them; and that if you detect them in a fraud, they calmly plead *the custom of the country*.* Such are the people by whom

* See Leland's *Advantage and Necessity of Revelation*, Vol. II. Part II. Chap. IV.

we are to be taught the uſe and practice of natural theology!

If credit could be given to what ſome writers have advanced, we might ſuppoſe the moral philoſophy and virtuous conduct of the *Hindoos* to be worthy of being a pattern to the world. The rules by which they govern their conduct are, as we have been told, "Not to tell falſe tales, nor to utter any "thing that is untrue; not to ſteal any thing "from others, be it ever ſo little; not to de- "fraud any by their cunning in bargains, "or contracts; not to oppreſs any when "they have power to do it."*

Very oppoſite accounts, however, are given by numerous and reſpectable witneſſes, and who do not appear to have written under the influence of prejudice. I ſhall ſelect but two or three.

Francis Bernier, an intelligent French Traveller, ſpeaking of the Hindoos, ſays— "I know not whether there be in the world "a more covetous and ſordid nation. The "Brahmins keep theſe people in their er- "rors and ſuperſtitions, and *ſcruple not to "commit tricks and villainies ſo infamous*, "that I could never have believed them, if "I had not made an ample inquiry into "them."†

Governor Holwell thus characteriſes them: "A race of people, who, from their infancy,

* Harris's *Voyages and Travels*, Vol. I. Chap. II. § xi. xii.

† *Voyages* de François Bernier, Tome I. p. 150, 162, et Tome II. p. 105.

" are utter ſtrangers to the idea of common
" faith and honeſty."

" This is the ſituation of the bulk of the
" people of Indoſtan, as well as of the mo-
" dern Brahmins: amongſt the latter, if we
" except one in a thouſand, we give them o-
" ver meaſure."

" The Gentoos in general are as degene-
" rate, ſuperſtitious, litigious, and wicked a
" people, as any race of people in the known
" world, if not eminently more ſo, eſpecially
" the common run of Brahmins; and we
" can truly aver, that during almoſt five years
" that we preſided in the Judicial Cutchery
" Court of Calcutta, never any murder, or
" other atrocious crime came before us, but
" it was proved in the end a Brahmin was
" at the bottom of it."*

Mr. afterwards *Sir John Shore*, and Governor General of Bengal, ſpeaking of the ſame people, ſays, " A man muſt be long
" acquainted with them before he can be-
" lieve them capable of that bare-faced falſe-
" hood, ſervile adulation, and deliberate de-
" ception, which they daily practiſe.—It is
" the buſineſs of all, from the Ryott to the
" Dewan, to conceal and deceive; the ſim-
" pleſt matters of fact are deſignedly cover-
" ed with a veil, through which no human
" underſtanding can penetrate."†

* Holwell's *Hiſtorical Events*, Vol. I. p. 228, and Vol. II. p. 151.

† *Parliamentary Proceedings againſt Mr. Haſtings*, Appendix to Vol. II. p. 65.

In perfect agreement with these accounts are others which are constantly received from persons of observation and probity, now residing in India. Of these the following are extracts—"Lying, theft, whoredom, and de-
"ceit are sins for which the Hindoos are no-
"torious There is not one man in a thou-
"sand, who does not make lying his con-
"stant practice. Their thoughts of God are
"so very light, that they only consider him
"as a sort of play-thing. Avarice and ser-
"vility are so united in almost every indi-
"vidual, that cheating, juggling, and lying,
"are esteemed no sins with them; and the
"best among them, though they speak ever
"so great a falsehood, yet it is not consider-
"ed as an evil, unless you first charge them
"to speak the truth. When they defraud
"you ever so much, and you charge them
"with it, they coolly answer, *It is the cus-*
"*tom of the country.*"

"In England the poor receive the benefit
"of the gospel in being fed and clothed by
"those who know not by what principles
"they are moved. For when the gospel is
"generally acknowledged in a land, it puts
"some to fear, and others to shame; so that
"to relieve their own smart they provide for
"the poor: but here, O miserable state! I
"have found the pathway stopped up by
"sick and wounded people, perishing with
"hunger; and that in a populous neighbor-
"hood, where numbers pass by, some sing-
"ing, others talking, but none shewing mer-

" cy; as though they were dying weeds, and " not dying men."*

Comparing theſe accounts, a reader might be apt to ſuppoſe that the people muſt have greatly *degenerated* ſince their laws were framed; but the truth is, the laws are nearly as corrupt as the people. Thoſe who examine the *Hindoo Code*,† will find them ſo; and will perceive that there is ſcarcely a ſpecies of wickedneſs which they do not tolerate, eſpecially in favor of the Brahmhans, of which order of men, it may be preſumed, were the firſt framers of the conſtitution.

Let the reader judge from this example of the Hindoos, what degree of credit is due to antichriſtian hiſtorians, when they undertake to deſcribe the virtues of heathens.

From this brief ſtatement of facts it is not very difficult to perceive ſomewhat of that which Chriſtianity has accompliſhed with regard to the general ſtate of ſociety. It is by no means denied that the natural diſpoſitions of heathens, as well as other men, are various. The Scriptures themſelves record inſtances of their amiable deportment towards their fellow-creatures.‡ Neither is it denied that there are characters in chriſtianized nations, and that in great numbers, whoſe wickedneſs cannot be exceeded, nor equalled, by any who are deſtitute of their

* *Periodical Accounts of the Baptiſt Miſſion*, No. II. p. 129. No. III. p. 191, 230. No. IV. p. 291.

† Tranſlated from the Shanſcrit, and publiſhed in 1773.

‡ Geneſis XXIII.

advantages. There is no doubt but that the general moral character of heathens is far leſs atrocious than that of deiſts, who reject the light of Revelation, and of multitudes of nominal Chriſtians who abuſe it. The ſtate of both theſe deſcriptions of men with reſpect to unenlightened pagans, is as that of Chorazin and Bethſaida with reſpect to Sodom and Gomorrha.

But that for which I contend is the effect of Chriſtianity upon *the general ſtate of ſociety*. It is an indiſputable fact that it has baniſhed groſs idolatry from every nation in Europe. It is granted that where whole nations were concerned, this effect might be at firſt accompliſhed, not by perſuaſion, but by force of arms. In this manner many legiſlators of former times thought they did God ſervice. But whatever were the means by which the worſhip of the one living and true God was at firſt introduced, it is a fact that the principle is now ſo fully eſtabliſhed in the minds and conſciences of men, that there needs no force to prevent the return of the old ſyſtem of Polytheiſm. There needs no greater proof of this than has been afforded by unbelievers of a neighboring nation. Such evidently has been their predilection for pagan manners, that, if the light that has gone abroad amongſt mankind permitted it, they would at once have plunged into groſs idolatry, as into their native element. But this is rendered morally impoſſible. They muſt be theiſts, or atheiſts; polytheiſts they cannot be.

By accounts which, from time to time, have been received, it appears that the prevailing party in France have not only labored to eradicate every principle of Chriſtianity, but, in one inſtance, actually made the experiment for reſtoring ſomething like the old idolatry. A reſpectable Magiſtrate of the United States,* in his Addreſs to the Grand Jury in Luzerne County, has ſtated a few of theſe facts to the public.

"Infidelity," ſays he, "having got poſ-
"ſeſſion of the power of the ſtate, every
"nerve was exerted to efface from the mind
"all ideas of religion and morality. The
"doctrine of the immortality of the ſoul, or
"a future ſtate of rewards and puniſhments,
"ſo eſſential to the preſervation of order in
"ſociety, and to the prevention of crimes,
"was publicly ridiculed, and the people
"taught to believe that death was an ever-
"laſting ſleep."

"They ordered the words 'Temple of
"Reaſon' to be inſcribed on the churches in
"contempt of the doctrine of Revelation.—
"Atheiſtical and licentious Homilies have
"been publiſhed in the churches inſtead of
"the old ſervice, and a ludicrous imitation
"of the Greek mythology exhibited under
"the title of 'The Religion of Reaſon.'—
"Nay, they have gone ſo far as to dreſs up
"a common ſtrumpet with the moſt fantaſ-
"tic decorations, whom they blaſphemouſly

* Judge Ruſh.

" ſtyled 'The Goddeſs of Reaſon,' and who
" was carried to church on the ſhoulders of
" ſome Jacobins ſelected for the purpoſe, es-
" corted by the National Guards and the
" conſtituted *authorities*. When they got to
" the church, the ſtrumpet was placed on
" the altar erected for the purpoſe, and ha-
" rangued the people, who, in return, pro-
" feſſed the deepeſt adoration to her, and
" ſung the *Carmagnole* and other ſongs, by
" way of worſhipping her. This horrid ſcene
" —almoſt too horrid to relate—was con-
" cluded by burning the prayer-book, con-
" feſſional, and every thing appropriated to
" the uſe of public worſhip: numbers in the
" mean time danced round the flames with
" every appearance of frantic and infernal
" mirth."

Theſe things ſufficiently expreſs the inclinations of the parties concerned, and what kind of bleſſings the world is to expect from Atheiſtical philoſophy; but all attempts of this kind are vain. The minds of men thro'-out Europe, if I may for once uſe a cant term of their own, are too *enlightened* to ſtoop to the practice of ſuch fooleries. We have a gentleman in our own country who appears to be a ſincere devotee to the pagan worſhip, and who, it ſeems would wiſh to introduce it; but as far as I can learn, all the ſucceſs which he has met with, is to have obtained from the public the honorable appellation of *the gentile prieſt*.

Whatever we are, and whatever we may

be, Groſs idolatry, I preſume, may be conſidered as baniſhed from Europe; and thanks be to God, a number of its attendant abominations, with various other immoral cuſtoms of the heathen, are in a good meaſure baniſhed with it. We have no human ſacrifices; no gladiatory combats; no public indecencies between the ſexes; no law that requires proſtitution; no plurality or community of wives; no diſſolving of marriages on trifling occaſions; nor any legal murdering of children, or of the aged and infirm. If unnatural crimes be committed amongſt us, they are not common; much leſs are they tolerated by the laws, or countenanced by public opinion. On the contrary, the odium which follow ſuch practices is ſufficient to ſtamp with perpetual infamy the firſt character in the land. Rapes, inceſts, and adulteries, are not only puniſhable by law, but odious in the eſtimation of the public. It is with us, at leaſt in a conſiderable degree, as it was in Judea, where he that was guilty of ſuch vices was conſidered as *a fool in Iſrael.* The ſame, in leſs degrees, may be ſaid of fornication, drunkenneſs, lying, theft, fraud, and cruelty; no one can live in the known practice of theſe vices, and retain his character. It cannot be pleaded in excuſe with us, as it is in China, Hindoſtan, and Otaheite, that SUCH THINGS ARE THE CUSTOM OF THE COUNTRY.

We freely acknowledge that if we turn our eyes upon the great evils which ſtill ex-

iſt, even in thoſe nations where Chriſtianity has had the greateſt influence, we find abundant reaſon for lamentation: but while we lament the evil, there is no reaſon that we ſhould over-look the good. Comparing our ſtate with that of former times, we cannot but with thankfulneſs acknowledge—*What hath God wrought!*

I can conceive of but one queſtion that can have any tendency to weaken the argument ariſing from the foregoing facts, viz. *Are they the effects of Chriſtianity?* If they be not, and can be fairly accounted for on other principles, the argument falls to the ground: but if they be, though Shaftesbury ſatirize, Hume doubt, Voltaire laugh, Gibbon inſinuate, and Paine pour forth ſcurrility like a torrent, yet honeſt men will ſay, *An evil tree bringeth not forth good fruit: If this Religion were not of God, it could do nothing.*

If there be any adequate cauſe diſtinct from Chriſtianity to which theſe effects may be aſcribed, it becomes our adverſaries to ſtate it. Mean while, I may obſerve, They are not aſcribable to any thing beſides Chriſtianity that has borne the name of *Religion*. As to that of the ancient heathens, it had no manner of relation to morality. The prieſts, as Dr. Leland has proved, "made it not their buſineſs to teach men virtue."*

It is the ſame with modern heathens.—

* *Advantage and Neceſſity of Revelation*, Vol. II. p. 38.

Their religion has nothing of morality pertaining to it. They perform a round of superstitious observances, which produce no good effect whatever upon their lives. What they were yesterday, they are to day; no man repenteth himself of his wickedness, saying, What have I done! Nor is it materially different with Mahomedans. Their religion, though it includes the acknowledgment of one living and true God, yet, rejecting the Messiah as the Son of God, and attaching them to a bloody and lascivious impostor, produces no good effect upon their morals, but leaves them under the dominion of barbarity and voluptuousness. In short there is no religion but that of Jesus Christ that so much as professes to *bless men by turning them from their iniquities.*

Neither can these effects be attributed to *philosophy.* A few great minds despised the idolatries of their countrymen; but they did not reform them: and no wonder; for they practised what they themselves despised. Nor did all their harangues in favor of virtue produce any substantial effect, either on themselves or others. The heathen nations were never more enlightened as to philosophy, than at the time of our Saviour's appearance; yet as to morality they never were more depraved.

It is Christianity then, and nothing else, which has destroyed the odious idolatry of many nations, and greatly contracted its attendant immoralities. It was in this way

that the gospel operated in the primitive ages, wherever it was received; and it is in the same way that it continues to operate to the present time. Real Christians must needs be adverse to these things; and they are the only men living who cordially set themselves against them.

This truth will receive additional evidence from an observation of the different degrees of morality produced in different places, according to the degree of purity with which the Christian religion has been taught, and liberty given it to operate. In several nations of Europe popery has long been established, and supported by sanguinary laws. By these means the Bible has been kept from the common people, Christian doctrine and worship corrupted, and the consciences of men subdued to a usurper of Christ's authority. Christianity is there in prison; and anti-christianism exalted in its place. In other nations this yoke is broken. Every true Christian has a Bible in his family, and measures his religion by it. The rights of conscience also being respected, men are allowed to judge and act in religious matters for themselves, and Christian churches are formed according to the primitive model. Christianity is here at liberty; here therefore it may be expected to produce its greatest effects. Whether this does not correspond with fact, let those who are accustomed to observe men and things with an impartial eye, determine.

In Italy, France, and various other countries, where the Chriſtian religion has been ſo far corrupted as to loſe nearly all its influence, illicit connexions may be formed, adulterous intrigues purſued, and even crimes againſt nature committed, with but little diſhonor. Rouſſeau could here ſend his illegitimate offſpring to the Foundling Hoſpital, and lay his accounts with being applauded for it, as being *the cuſtom of the country*. It is not ſo in Britain, and various other nations, where the goſpel has had a freer courſe: for though the ſame diſpoſitions are diſcovered in great numbers of perſons, yet the fear of the public frown holds them in awe. If we except a few abandoned characters, who have nearly loſt all ſenſe of ſhame, and who by means either of their titles and fortunes on the one hand, or their well known baſeneſs on the other, have almoſt bid defiance to the opinion of mankind, this obſervation will hold good, I believe, as to the bulk of the inhabitants of proteſtant countries.

And it is worthy of notice, that in thoſe circles or connexions where Chriſtianity has had the greateſt influence, a ſobriety of character is carried to a much higher degree than in any other. Where there is one divorce from amongſt proteſtant diſſenters, and other ſerious profeſſors of Chriſtianity, there are, I believe, a hundred from amongſt thoſe whoſe practice it is to frequent the amuſements of the theatre, and to neglect the worſhip of God. And in proportion to the fin-

gularity of ſuch caſes, ſuch is the ſurpriſe, indignation, and diſgrace which accompany them. Similar obſervations might be made on public executions for robbery, forgery, tumults, aſſaſſinations, murders, &c. It is not amongſt the circles profeſſing a ſerious regard to Chriſtianity, but amongſt its adverſaries, that theſe practices ordinarily prevail.

Some have been inclined to attribute various differences in theſe things to a difference in *national character:* but national character, as it reſpects morality, is formed very much from the ſtate of ſociety in different nations. A number of painful obſervations would ariſe from a view of the conduct and character of Engliſhmen on foreign ſhores. To ſay nothing of the rapacities committed in the Eaſt, whither is our boaſted humanity fled when we land upon the coaſts of Guinea? The brutality with which millions of our fellow-creatures have been torn from their connexions, bound in irons, thrown into a floating dungeon, ſold in the public markets, beaten, maimed, and many of them murdered, for trivial offences, and all this without any effectual reſtraint from the laws, muſt load our national character with everlaſting infamy. The ſame perſons, however, who can be guilty of theſe crimes at a diſtance, are as apparently humane as other people when they re enter their native country. And wherefore? Becauſe in their native country the ſtate of ſociety is ſuch as will not admit of a contrary behavior.—A

man who ſhould violate the principles of juſtice and humanity here, would not only be expoſed to the cenſure of the laws, but, ſuppoſing he could evade this, his character would be loſt. The ſtate of ſociety in Guinea impoſes no ſuch reſtraints; in that ſituation therefore wicked men will indulge in wickedneſs. Nor is it much otherwiſe in our Weſt-India Iſlands. So little is there of Chriſtianity in thoſe quarters, that it has hitherto had ſcarcely any influence in the framing of their laws, or the forming of the public opinion. There are, doubtleſs, juſt and humane individuals in thoſe iſlands; but the far greater part of them, it is to be feared, are devotees to avarice: to which, as to a Moloch, one or other of them are continually offering up human victims.

Vicious practices are commonly more prevalent in large and populous cities than in other places. Hither the worſt characters commonly reſort, as noxious animals to a covert from their purſuers. In places but thinly inhabited, the conduct of individuals is conſpicuous to the community: but here they can aſſemble with others of their own deſcription, and ſtrengthen each other's hands in evil, without much fear of being detected. Chriſtianity, therefore, may be ſuppoſed to have leſs effect in the way of reſtraining immoral characters in the city, than in the country. Yet even here it is ſenſibly felt.—The metropolis of our own nation, though it abounds with almoſt every ſpecies of vice,

yet what reflecting citizen will deny that it would be much worſe but for the influence of the goſpel?—As it is, there are numbers of different religious denominations, who conſtantly attend to public and family worſhip; who are as honorable in their dealings as they are amiable in domeſtic life; and as liberal in their benefactions as they are aſſiduous to find out deſerving caſes. The influence which this body of men have upon the citizens at large, in reſtraining vice, promoting ſchemes of benevolence, and preſerving peace and good order in ſociety, is beyond calculation. But for their examples and unremitted exertions, London would be a Sodom in its guilt, and might expect to reſemble it in its puniſhment.

In country towns and villages it is eaſy to perceive the influence which a number of ſerious Chriſtians will have upon the manners of the people at large. A few families in which the Bible is daily read, the worſhip of God performed, and a Chriſtian converſation exemplified, will have a powerful effect. Whether characters of an oppoſite deſcription regard their conduct, or not, their conſciences favor it. Hence it is that one upright man, in a queſtion of right and wrong, will often put to ſilence a company of the advocates of unrighteouſneſs; and that three or four Chriſtian families have been known to give a turn to the manners of a whole neighborhood.

In fine, let it be cloſely conſidered whe-

ther a great part of that ſobriety which is to be found *among deiſts themſelves* (as there are, doubtleſs, ſober characters among deiſts, and even among atheiſts) be not owing to Chriſtianity. It has often been remarked, and juſtly too, that much of the *knowledge* which our adverſaries poſſeſs, is derived from this ſource. To ſay nothing of the beſt ideas of the old philoſophers on moral ſubjects being derived from Revelation, of which there is conſiderable evidence, it is manifeſt that ſo far as the moderns exceed them, it is principally, if not entirely owing to this medium of inſtruction. The ſcriptures having diffuſed the light, they have inſenſibly imbibed it; and finding it to accord with reaſon, they flatter themſelves that *their* reaſon has diſcovered it. "After grazing," as one expreſſes it, "in the paſtures of Revelation, they boaſt of having grown fat by nature." And it is the ſame with regard to their ſobriety. So long as they reſide among people whoſe ideas of right and wrong are formed by the morality of the goſpel, they muſt, unleſs they wiſh to be ſtigmatized as profligates, behave with ſome degree of decorum. Where the conduct is uniform and conſiſtent, charity, I allow, and even juſtice will lead us to put the beſt conſtruction upon the motive; but when we ſee men uneaſy under reſtraints, and continually writing in favor of vices which they dare not openly practiſe, we are juſtified in imputing their ſobriety, not to principle, but to the circumſtances attending

their ſituation. If ſome of thoſe gentlemen, who have deſerted the Chriſtian miniſtry, and commenced profeſſed infidels, had acted years ago as licentiouſly as they have done of late, they muſt have quitted their ſituation ſooner; and were they now to leave their country and connexions, and enter into ſuch a ſtate of ſociety as would comport with their preſent wiſhes, their conduct would be more licentious than it is.

On theſe principles that great and excellent man, Preſident WASHINGTON, in his farewell addreſs to the people of the United States, acknowledges the neceſſity of religion to the well-being of a nation. "Of all the "diſpoſitions and habits which lead to poli-"tical proſperity," he ſays, "Religion and "morality are indiſpenſible ſupports. In "vain would that man claim the tribute of "patriotiſm, who ſhould labor to ſubvert "theſe great pillars of human happineſs— "theſe firmeſt props of men and citizens. The "mere politician, equally with the pious "man, ought to reſpect and to cheriſh them. "A Volume could not trace all their con-"nexions with private and public felicity. "Let it be ſimply aſked, where is the ſecur-"ity for property, for reputation, for life, if "the ſenſe of religious obligation deſert the "oaths, which are the inſtruments of inves-"tigation in the courts of juſtice? And let "us with caution indulge the ſuppoſition, "that morality can be maintained without "religion.—Whatever may be conceded to

" the influence of refined education on minds
" of peculiar ſtructure; reaſon and experi-
" ence both forbid us to expect that nation-
" al morality can prevail in excluſion of re-
" ligious principle."

Upon the whole, the evidence of this chapter proves that Chriſtianity is not only a living principle of virtue in good men, but affords this farther bleſſing to ſociety, that it reſtrains the vices of the bad. It is a tree of life whoſe fruit is immortality, and whoſe very leaves are for the healing of the nations.

CHAP. VII.

Chriſtianity is a ſource of happineſs to individuals and ſociety: but Deiſm leaves both the one and the other without hope.

THOUGH the happineſs of creatures be not admitted to be the final end of God's moral government, yet it is freely allowed to occupy an important place in the ſyſtem. God is good; and his goodneſs appears in his having ſo blended the honor of his name with the felicity of his creatures, that in ſeeking the one they ſhould find the other. In ſo important a light do we conſider human happineſs, as to be willing to allow that to be the true religion which is moſt adapted to promote it.

To form an accurate judgment on this ſubject, it is neceſſary to aſcertain wherein happineſs conſiſts. We ought neither to expect nor deſire, in the preſent life, ſuch a ſtate of mind as wholly excludes painful ſenſations. Had we leſs of the exerciſes of godly ſorrow, our ſacred pleaſures would be fewer than they are: or were we unacquainted with the afflictions common to men, we ſhould be leſs able to ſympathize with them; which would be injurious not only to ſociety, but to ourſelves, as it would deprive us of one of the richeſt ſources of enjoyment.

Mr. *Hume*, in one of his Eſſays, very properly called *The Sceptic*, ſeems to think that

happineſs lies in having one's inclinations gratified; and as different men have different inclinations, and even the ſame men at different times, *that* may be happineſs in one caſe which is miſery in another. This ſceptical writer, however would hardly deny that in happineſs, as in other things, there is a falſe and a true, an imaginary and a real; or that a ſtudied indulgence of the appetites and paſſions, though it ſhould promote the one, would deſtroy the other. The light of nature, as acknowledged even by deiſts, teaches that ſelf-denial, in many caſes, is neceſſary to ſelf-preſervation; and that to act a contrary part would be to ruin our peace, and deſtroy our health.* I preſume it will be granted that no definition of happineſs can be complete, which includes not peace of mind—which admits not of perpetuity—or which anſwers not the neceſſities and miſeries of human life.

But if nothing deſerve the name of happineſs which does not include *peace of mind*, all criminal pleaſure is at once excluded.—Could a life of unchaſtity, intrigue, diſhonor, and diſappointed pride, like that of *Rouſſeau*, be a happy life? No; amidſt the brilliancy of his talents, remorſe, ſhame, conſcious meanneſs, and the dread of a hereafter, muſt corrode his heart, and render him a ſtranger to peace. Contraſt with the life of this man that of *Howard*. Pious, temperate, juſt, and

* Volney's *Law of Nature*, p. 12.

benevolent, he lived for the good of mankind. His happineſs conſiſted in *ſerving his generation by the will of God.* If all men were like Rouſſeau, the world would be much more miſerable than it is:—If all were like Howard, it would be much more happy.—Rouſſeau, governed by the love of fame, is fretful, and peeviſh, and never ſatisfied with the treatment he receives: Howard, governed by the love of mercy, ſhrinks from applauſe, with this modeſt and juſt reflection, "Alas, our beſt performances have ſuch a mixture of ſin and folly, that praiſe is vanity, and preſumption, and pain to a thinking mind." Rouſſeau, after a life of debauchery and ſhame, confeſſes it to the world, and makes a merit of his confeſſion, and even preſumptuouſly ſuppoſes that it will avail him before the Judge of all: Howard, after a life of ſingular devotedneſs to God, and benevolence to men, accounted himſelf an unprofitable ſervant, leaving this for his motto, his laſt teſtimony, CHRIST IS MY HOPE.—Can there be any doubt which of the two was the happieſt man?

Further, If nothing amounts to real happineſs which admits not of *perpetuity*, all natural pleaſure, when weighed againſt the hopes and joys of the goſpel, will be found wanting. It is an expreſſive characteriſtic of the good things of this life, that *they all periſh with the uſing*. The charms of youth and beauty quickly fade. The power of reliſhing natural enjoyments is ſoon gone. The plea-

ſures of active life, of building, planting, forming ſchemes, and atchieving enterprizes ſoon follow. In old age none of them will flouriſh; and in death they are exterminated. —*The mighty man, and the man of war, the judge and the prophet, and the prudent, and the ancient, the captain of fifty, and the honorable man, and the counſellor, and the cunning artificer, and the eloquent orator*, all deſcend in one undiſtinguiſhed maſs into oblivion. And as this is a truth which no man can diſpute; thoſe who have no proſpects of a higher nature, muſt often feel themſelves unhappy. Contraſt with this the joys of the goſpel. Theſe, inſtead of being diminiſhed by time, are often increaſed. To them the foil of age is friendly. While nature has been fading, and periſhing by ſlow degrees, how often have we ſeen faith, hope, love, patience, and reſignation to God in full bloom. Who but Chriſtians can contemplate the loſs of all preſent enjoyments with ſatisfaction? Who elſe can view death, judgment, and eternity with deſire?—I appeal to the hearts of unbelievers, whether they have not many miſgivings and revoltings within them; and whether in the hour of ſolitary reflection they have not ſighed the wiſh of Balaam, *Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my laſt end be like his!*

It is obſervable that even *Rouſſeau* himſelf, though the language certainly did not become his lips, affected to derive conſolation in advanced life from Chriſtian princi-

ples. In a letter to *Voltaire*, he ſays, "I cannot help remarking, Sir, a very ſingular contraſt between you and me. Sated with glory, and undeceived with the inanity of worldly grandeur, you live at freedom, in the midſt of plenty, certain of immortality; you peaceably philoſophiſe on the nature of the ſoul; and if the body or the heart are indiſpoſed, you have Tronchin for your phyſician and friend. Yet with all this you find nothing but evil on the face of the earth. I, on the other hand, obſcure, indigent, tormented with an incurable diſorder, meditate, with pleaſure, on my ſolitude, and find every thing to be good. Whence ariſe theſe apparent contradictions?—You have yourſelf explained them. You live in a ſtate of enjoyment, I in a ſtate of hope; and hope gives charms to every thing."*

Finally, If nothing deſerves the name of happineſs which *meets not the neceſſities, nor relieves the miſeries of human life*, Chriſtianity alone can claim it. Every one who looks into his own heart, and makes proper obſervations on the diſpoſitions of others, will perceive that man is poſſeſſed of a deſire after ſomething which is not to be found under the ſun—after A GOOD WHICH HAS NO LIMITS. We may imagine our deſires are moderate, and ſet boundaries beyond which we may flatter ourſelves we ſhould

* *Works*, Vol. IX. p. 336.

never wiſh to paſs; but this is ſelf-deception. He that ſets his heart on an eſtate, if he gain it, will with for ſomething more. It would be the ſame if it were a kingdom; or even if all the kingdoms of the world were united in one. Nor is this deſire to be attributed merely to human depravity; for it is the ſame with regard to knowledge: the mind is never ſatisfied with its preſent acquiſitions. It is depravity that directs us to ſeek ſatisfaction in ſomething ſhort of God; but it is owing to the nature of the ſoul that we are never able to find it. It is not poſſible that a being created immortal, and with a mind capable of continual enlargement, ſhould obtain ſatisfaction in a limited good. Men may ſpend their time and ſtrength, and even ſacrifice their ſouls in ſtriving to graſp it, but it will elude their purſuit. It is only from an uncreated ſource that the mind can drink its fill. Here it is that the goſpel meets our neceſſities.—Its language is, *Ho, every one that thirſteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money: come ye, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money, and without price. Wherefore do ye ſpend money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which ſatisfieth not? Hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your ſoul delight itſelf in fatneſs. Incline your ear, and come unto me: hear, and your ſoul ſhall live.—In the laſt day, that great day of the feaſt, Jeſus ſtood and cried, ſaying, If any man thirſt, let him come unto me and*

*drink.—He that cometh to me ſhall never hunger; and he that believeth in me ſhall never thirſt.** How this language has been verified, all who have made the trial can teſtify. To them, as to the only competent witneſſes, I appeal.

It is not merely the nature of the ſoul, however, but its depravity, from whence our neceſſities ariſe. We are ſinners. Every man who believes there is a God, and a future ſtate, or even only admits the poſſibility of them, feels the want of mercy. The firſt inquiries of a mind awakened to reflection will be, how he may eſcape the wrath to come; how he ſhall get over his everlaſting ruin? A heathen, previous to any Chriſtian inſtruction, exclaimed, in the moment of alarm—*What muſt I do to be ſaved?*† And ſeveral Mahomedans, being lately warned by a Chriſtian miniſter of their ſinful ſtate, came, the next morning to him with this very ſerious queſtion, *Keman par hoibo*—"How ſhall we get over?‡ To anſwer theſe inquiries is beyond the power of any principles but thoſe of the goſpel. Philoſophy may conjecture, ſuperſtition may deceive, and even a falſe ſyſtem of Chriſtianity may be aiding and abetting; each may labor to lay the conſcience aſleep, but none of theſe can yield it ſatisfaction. It is only by believing in Jeſus

* Iſai. lv. 1—3. John vii. 37. vi. 35.

† Acts xvi. 30.

‡ *Periodical Accounts of the Baptiſt Miſſionary Society*, No. IV. p. 326.

Chriſt, the great ſacrifice that taketh away the ſin of the world, that the ſinner obtains a relief which will bear reflection; a relief which, at the ſame time, gives peace to the mind, and purity to the heart. For the truth of this, alſo, I appeal to all who have made the trial.

Where, but in the goſpel, will you find relief under the innumerable ills of the preſent ſtate? This is the well known refuge of Chriſtians, are they poor, afflicted, perſecuted, or reproached? They are led to conſider Him who endured the contradiction of ſinners—who lived a life of poverty and ignominy—who endured perſecution and reproach, and death itſelf, for them; and to realize a bleſſed immortality in proſpect.—By a view of ſuch things their hearts are cheered, and their afflictions become tolerable. Looking to Jeſus, who, for the joy ſet before him, endured the croſs, deſpiſing the ſhame, and is now ſet down at the right hand of the throne of God, they run with patience the race that is ſet before them.

But what is the comfort of unbelievers? Life being ſhort, and having no ground to hope for any thing beyond it, if they be croſsed here they become inconſolable. Hence it is not uncommon for perſons of this deſcription, after the example of the philoſophers and ſtateſmen of Greece and Rome, when they find themſelves depreſſed by adverſity, and have no proſpect of recovering their fortunes to put a period to their lives! Unhappy

men! Is this the felicity to which ye would introduce us? Is it in guilt, ſhame, remorſe, and deſperation that ye deſcry ſuch charms? Admitting that our hope of immortality is viſionary, where is the injury?—If it be a dream, is it not a pleaſant one?—To ſay the leaſt, it beguiles many a melancholy hour, and can do no miſchief: but if it be a reality, what will become of you?

I may be told, that if many put a period to their lives through unbelief, there is an equal number who fall ſacrifices to religious melancholy. But to render this objection of force, it ſhould be proved that the religion of Jeſus Chriſt is the *cauſe* of this melancholy. Reaſon may convince us of the being of a God, and conſcience bear witneſs that we are expoſed to his diſpleaſure. Now if in this ſtate of mind the heart refuſe to acquieſce in the goſpel way of ſalvation, we ſhall, of courſe, either reſt in ſome deluſive hope, or ſink into deſpair. But here, it is not religion, but the want of it that generates the evil. It is unbelief, and not faith, that ſinks the ſinner into deſpondency.—Chriſtianity diſowns ſuch characters. It records ſome few examples, ſuch as Saul, Ahithophel, and Judas: but they are all branded as apoſtates from God and true religion. On the contrary, the writings of unbelievers, both ancient and modern, are known to plead for ſuicide, as an expedient in extremity. Rouſſeau, Hume and others have written in defence of it. The principles of ſuch men both

produce and require it. It is the natural offſpring of unbelief, and the laſt reſort of disappointed pride.

Whether Chriſtianity, or the want of it, be beſt adapted to relieve the heart under its various preſſures, let thoſe teſtify who have been in the habit of viſiting the afflicted poor. On this ſubject the writer of theſe ſheets can ſpeak from his own knowledge. In this ſituation characters of very oppoſite deſcriptions are found. Some are ſerious and ſincere Chriſtians: others, even among thoſe who have attended the preaching of the goſpel, appear neither to underſtand nor to feel it. The tale of woe is told, perhaps, by both: but the one is unaccompanied with that diſcontent, that wretchedneſs of mind, and that inclination to deſpair, which is manifeſt in the other. Often have I ſeen the cheerful ſmile of contentment under circumſtances the moſt abject and afflictive. Amidſt tears of ſorrow, which a full heart has rendered it impoſſible to ſuppreſs, a mixture of hope and joy has gliſtened. "The cup which my Fa-" ther hath given me to drink, ſhall I not " drink it?"—Such have been their feelings, and ſuch their expreſſions; and where this has been the caſe, death has generally been embraced as the meſſenger of peace. *Here*, I have ſaid, participating of their ſenſations, *here is the patience, and the faith of the ſaints. Here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jeſus. This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.*

Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jeſus is the Son of God?

From individual happineſs let us proceed to examine that of *ſociety*. Let us enquire whether there be any well grounded hope of the future melioration of the ſtate of mankind beſides that which is afforded by the goſpel. Great expectations have been raiſed of an end being put to wars, and of univerſal good-will pervading the earth, in conſequence of philoſophical illumination, and the prevalence of certain modes of civil government. But theſe ſpeculations proceed upon falſe data. They ſuppoſe that the cauſe of theſe evils is to be looked for in the ignorance, rather than the depravity of men: or if depravity be allowed to have any influence, it is confined to the precincts of a court. Without taking upon me to decide which is the beſt form of civil government, or what mode is moſt adapted to promote the peace and happineſs of mankind, it is ſufficient, in this caſe, to ſhew that wars generally originate, as the apoſtle James ſays, in the luſts, or *corrupt paſſions* of mankind. If this be proved, it will follow, that however ſome forms of government may be more friendly to peace and happineſs than others, yet no *radical* cure can be effected till the diſpoſitions of men are changed. Let power be placed where it may, with one, or with many, ſtill it muſt be in the hands of men. If all governments were ſo framed as that every national act ſhould be expreſſive of the real

will of the people, ſtill if the preponderating part of them be governed by pride and ſelf-love rather than equity; we are not much the nearer. Governors taken from the common maſs of ſociety, muſt need reſemble it. If there be any difference at the time of their firſt elevation to office, owing, as may be ſuppoſed, to the preference which all men give to an upright character for the management of their concerns, yet this advantage will be balanced, if not over-balanced, by the ſubſequent temptations to injuſtice which are afforded by ſituations of wealth and power.

What is the ſource of contentions in common life? Obſerve the diſcords in neighborhoods, and families; which, notwithſtanding all the reſtraints of relationſhip, intereſt, honor, law, and reaſon, are a fire that never ceaſes to burn; and which, were they no more controlled by the laws than independent nations from each other, would, in thouſands of inſtances, break forth into aſſaſſinations and murders. From whence ſpring theſe wars?—Are they the reſult of *ignorance?* If ſo, they would chiefly be confined to the rude, or uninformed part of the community. But is it ſo? There may, it is true, be more pretences to peace and good-will, and fewer burſts of open reſentment in the higher, than in the lower orders of people: but their diſpoſitions are much the ſame.—The laws of politeneſs can only poliſh the ſurface; and there are ſome parts of the hu-

man characters which ſtill appear very rough. Even politeneſs has its regulations for ſtrife and murder, and eſtabliſhes iniquity by a law. The evil diſpoſition is a kind of ſubterraneous fire; and it will have vent in ſome form. Are they the reſult of *court-influence?* No. The truth is, if civil government in ſome form did not influence the fears of the unjuſt and contentious part of the community, there would be no ſecurity to thoſe who are peaceably inclined and eſpecially to thoſe who are withal religious, and whoſe pious conduct, like that of Noah, condemns the world. Now the ſame diſpoſition which in perſons whoſe power extends only to a cottage, will operate in a way of domeſtic diſcord, in others, whoſe influence extends to the affairs of nations, will operate on a more enlarged ſcale; producing war and all the dire calamities which attend it. The ſum of the whole is this: when the preponderating part of the world ſhall ceaſe to be proud, ambitious, envious, covetous, lovers of their own ſelves, falſe, malignant, and intriguing; when they ſhall love God and one another out of a pure heart; then, and not till then, may we expect wars to ceaſe, and the ſtate of mankind to be eſſentially meliorated. While theſe diſpoſitions remain, they will be certain to ſhew themſelves. If the beſt laws or conſtitution in the world ſtands in their way, they will, on certain occaſions, bear down all before them.

An anonymous writer in the *Monthly Magazine*,* (a work which without avowing it, is pretty evidently devoted to the cauſe of infidelity) has inſtituted an inquiry into "The probability of the future melioration of the ſtate of mankind." A diſmal proſpect indeed it is which he holds up to his fellow creatures; yet were I an infidel, like him, I ſhould acquieſce in many things which he advances. The anchor of his hopes is *an increaſe of knowledge*, and the effects of this are circumſcribed within a very narrow boundary. With reſpect to what we call *civilization*, he reckons it to have undergone all the viciſſitudes of which it is capable. *Scientific refinement* may contribute to the happineſs of a few individuals; but he fears cannot be made a ground of much advantage to the maſs of mankind. Great ſcope indeed remains for the operation of increaſed knowledge in improvement in *government*: but even here it can only cure thoſe evils which ariſe from ignorance, and not thoſe which proceed from intention, which, "while the propenſity to prefer our "own intereſts above that of the community "is, as he acknowledges, interwoven into our "very nature," will always form the maſs of exiſting ills. If indeed the majority of a community, he ſays, became ſo enlightened concerning their intereſts, and ſo wiſe, ſteady, and unanimous in the purſuit of them, as to overcome all that reſiſtance which the poſſeſſors of undue advantages will always

* For February 1799, Page 9.

make to a change unfavorable to themſelves, ſomething might be hoped for. But this, while they are under their old maſters, he reckons as next to impoſſible. As to *political revolutions*, he did form high expectations from them; but his hopes are at an end. "I have only the wiſh left, ſays he, the "confidence is gone." As to *improved ſyſtems of morality*, which he conſiders as the art of living happy, though it might ſeem promiſing, yet hiſtory, he very juſtly remarks, does not allow us to expect that men in proportion as they advance in this ſpecies of knowledge will become more juſt, more temperate, or more benevolent. Of the *extinction of wars*, he has no hope. The new order of things which ſeemed opening in Europe, and to bid fair for it, has rather increaſed the evil; and as to *chriſtianity*, it has been tried it ſeems and found to be inſufficient for the purpoſe. *Commerce*, inſtead of binding the nations in a golden chain of mutual peace and friendſhip, ſeems only to have given additional motives for war.

The amount is, there is little or no hope of the ſtate of mankind being meliorated on *public* principles. All the improvement he can diſcern in this way conſiſts in there being a little more lenity in the government of ſome countries than formerly: and as to this, it is balanced by the prodigious increaſe of ſtanding armies, and other national burdens.

The only way in which *an increaſe of knowledge* is to operate to the melioration of the ſtate of mankind, is in *private life*. It is to ſoften and humanize men's manners, and emancipate their minds from the ſhackles of ſuperſtition and bigotry, names which writers of this claſs commonly beſtow upon chriſtianity. This is the boundary beyond which, whatever be his wiſhes, the hopes of this writer will not ſuffer him to paſs: and even this reſpects only Europe and her immediate connexions, and not the whole of them. The great maſs of mankind are in an abſolutely hopeleſs condition: for there are no means of carrying our improvements among them but by conqueſt, and conqueſt is a Pandora's box, at the mention of which he ſhudders.

Such are the proſpects of unbelievers; ſuch is the horrid deſpondency under which they ſink when providence counteracts their favorite ſchemes; and ſuch the ſpirit which they take pains to infuſe into the minds of men in order to make them happy! Chriſtian reader, Have you no better hopes than theſe? Are you not acquainted with a principle, which like the machine of Archimedes, will remove this mighty maſs of evils? Be they as great and as numerous as they may, if all can be reduced to a ſingle cauſe, and that cauſe removed, the work is done. All the evils of which this writer complains are reducible to that one princi-

ple, which he ſays, (and 'tis well *he* ſays it) "is interwoven into our very nature; name-"ly, The propenſity to prefer our own inter-"eſts above that of the community." It is this propenſity that operates in the great, and induces them to "oppoſe every thing that would be unfavourable to their power and advantage;" and the ſame thing operates among common people; great numbers of whom, it is well known, would ſell their country for a piece of bread. If this principle cannot be removed, I ſhall, with this writer, forever deſpair of any eſſential changes for the better, in the ſtate of mankind, and will content myſelf with cultivating private and domeſtic happineſs, and hoping for the bleſſedneſs of a future life: but if it can, I muſt leave him to deſpair alone.

My hopes are not founded on forms of government, nor even on an increaſe of knowledge, though each may have its value; *but on the ſpirit by which both the rulers and the people will be governed.* All forms of government have hitherto reſted on the baſis of *ſelf-love.* The wiſeſt and beſt ſtateſmen have been obliged to take it for granted that the maſs of every people will be governed by this principle; and conſequently all their ſchemes have been directed to the balancing of things in ſuch a manner as that people in purſuing their own intereſt ſhould promote that of the public. If in any caſe they have preſumed on the contrary, expe-

rience has ſoon taught them that all their ſchemes are viſionary, and inapplicable to real life. But if the maſs of the people, compoſed of all the different orders of ſociety, were governed by a ſpirit of juſtice and diſintereſted benevolence, ſyſtems of government might ſafely be formed on this baſis. It would then be ſufficient for ſtateſmen to aſcertain what was right, and beſt adapted to promote the good of the community, and the people would cheerfully purſue it; and purſuing this, would find their own good more effectually promoted than by all the little diſcordant arts of a ſelfiſh mind.

The excellence of the moſt admired conſtitutions which have hitherto appeared in the world, has chiefly conſiſted in the balance of power being ſo diſtributed amongſt the different orders of ſociety as that no one ſhould materially oppreſs or injure the other. They have endeavoured to ſet boundaries to each others encroachments, and contrived in ſome degree to counteract venality, corruption, and tumult. But all this ſuppoſes a corrupt ſtate of ſociety, and amounts to no more than making the beſt of things, taking them as they are. Locks, and keys, and bolts, and bars are neceſſary in our houſes as things are: but it were better if there were no occaſion for them. I do not take upon me to ſay that things will ever be in ſuch a ſtate as that there ſhall be no need of theſe political precautions: but I believe they will be far leſs neceſſary than they now are.

If the bible be true, the knowledge of the Lord will cover the earth as the waters cover the ſea; the kingdoms of this world will become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Chriſt; idolatry, and every ſpecies of falſe religion ſhall be no more; the art and inſtruments of war ſhall be laid aſide, and exchanged for thoſe of huſbandry; the different tribes of man ſhall be united in one common band of brotherly love; ſlavery and oppreſſion will ceaſe; righteouſneſs will be eſtabliſhed in the earth; and the work of righteouſneſs ſhall be peace, and the effect of righteouſneſs, quietneſs and aſſurance for ever.

But "Chriſtianity has been tried, it ſeems, and found inſufficient." That it has not been as yet ſufficient to baniſh unjuſt wars from the earth, is true; and it were more than wonderful if it had, ſeeing it has never yet been cordially embraced by the majority, nor perhaps by the preponderating part of any nation. Nevertheleſs it has had its influence. This gloomy writer himſelf acknowledges that the ſtate of ſociety in Europe and America, that is to ſay in Chriſtendom, is far preferable to what it is in other parts of the earth. Of the reſt of the world he has no hope. Has Chriſtianity done nothing in this caſe? That thouſands in different nations are by a cordial belief of it, rendered ſober, juſt, diſintereſted, and peaceable; and that the ſtate of ſociety at large is greatly meliorated, has been proved, I

hope, already ;* to believe then in the future accompliſhment of the foregoing prophecies is only to believe that what is already effected in individuals will be extended to the general body of mankind, or, at leaſt, to ſuch a proportion of them as ſhall be ſufficient to give a preponderance in human affairs.

Moreover, the ſame book which declares that *the kingdoms of this world ſhall become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Chriſt*, has foretold, in a great variety of language, the downfall of the Papal Anti-chriſt, and that by means of the ſame powers from which its dominion was firſt derived. We have in part ſeen the fulfilment of the one, and live in expectation of the other. We are not ignorant of the evil deſigns of infidels, but we believe that God is above them, and that they are only inſtruments in his hand in the fulfilment of his word. While, therefore, we feel for the miſeries of mankind, occaſioned by the dreadful devaſtations of war, we ſorrow not as thoſe who have no hope ; but are perſuaded that all things, even now, are working together for good : and while we pity individual ſufferers, we cannot join the whining lamentations of intereſted men, *Alas, Alas. that great city!* On the contrary, we feel diſpoſed to join the ſong of the heavenly hoſt, *Amen, Alleluia! Salvation, and honor, and glory, and power*

* Chap. V. VI.

be unto the Lord our God: for true and righteous are his Judgments—Let us be glad, and rejoice, and give honor to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his bride hath made herſelf ready.

If, according to the doctrine of *Bolingbroke, Volney,* and other deiſts, we knew no other ſource of virtue and happineſs than *ſelf-love,* we ſhould often be leſs happy than we are. Our bleſſedneſs is bound up with that of Chriſt, and his followers throughout the world. His friends are our friends, and his enemies our enemies. They that ſeek his life, ſeek ours. The proſperity of his kingdom is our proſperity; and we prefer it above our chief joy. From the public ſtock of bleſſedneſs, being thus conſidered as the common property of every individual, ariſes a great and conſtant influx of enjoyment. Hence it is that in times when temporal comforts fail us, or family troubles depreſs us, or a cloud hangs over our particular connexions, or death threatens to arreſt us in a courſe of pleaſing labor, we have ſtill our reſources of conſolation. 'Affairs with me are ſinking; but *he muſt encreaſe*'—'My houſe is not ſo with God; but the kingdom of my Lord ſhall be eſtabliſhed for ever.'—: His intereſt ſinks in this congregation; but it riſes elſewhere!—'I die: but God will ſurely viſit you!' Such is the heritage of the ſervants of the Lord; and ſuch the bleſſedneſs of thoſe whoſe chief de-

fire it is, *that they may see the good of his chosen, that they may rejoice in the gladness of his nation; and that they may glory with his inheritance.*

The Goſpel its own Witneſs:

&c. &c.

PART II.

IN WHICH THE HARMONY OF THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION IS CONSIDERED AS AN EVIDENCE OF ITS DIVINITY.

IF Chriſtianity be an impoſture, it may, like all other impoſtures, be detected. Falſehood may always be proved to claſh with fact, with reaſon or with itſelf; and often with them all. If on the contrary, its origin be divine, it may be expected to bear the character of conſiſtency, which diſtinguiſhes every other divine production. If the Scriptures can be proved to harmonize with hiſtoric fact, with truth, with themſelves, and with ſober reaſon; they muſt, conſidering what they profeſs, be divinely inſpired, and Chriſtianity muſt be of God.

CHAP. I.

The harmony of Scripture with hiſtoric fact, evinced by the fulfilment of prophecy.

IF the pretence which the Scriptures make to divine inſpiration be unfounded, it can be no very difficult undertaking to prove it ſo. The ſacred writers, beſides abound-

ing in hiſtory, doctrine, and morality, have dealt largely in prophecy; and this not in the manner of the heathen prieſts, who made uſe of dark and dubious language. Their meaning in general is capable of being underſtood, even at this diſtance of time; and in many inſtances cannot be miſtaken. The diſpute, therefore, between believers and unbelievers is reducible to a ſhort iſſue. If Scripture prophecy be divinely inſpired, it will be accompliſhed; but if it be impoſture, it will not.

Let us ſuppoſe that, by digging in the earth, a cheſt were diſcovered, containing a number of ancient curioſities; and among other things, a tablet, inſcribed with calculations of the moſt remarkable eclipſes that ſhould take place for a great while to come. Theſe calculations are examined, and found to correſpond with fact for more than two thouſand years paſt, The inſpectors cannot agree perhaps in deciding who was the author, whether it had not gone through ſeveral hands when it was depoſited in the cheſt, and various other queſtions: but does this invalidate the truth of the calculations, or diminiſh the value of the tablet?

It cannot be objected that events have been predicted from mere political foreſight, which have actually come to paſs: for though this may have been the caſe in a few inſtances, wherein cauſes have already exiſted which afforded ground for the concluſion; yet it is impoſſible that the ſucceſſive

changes and revolutions of empires, ſome of which were more than a thouſand years diſtant, and depended on ten thouſand unknown incidents, ſhould be the objects of human ſpeculation.

Mr. *Paine* ſeems to feel the difficulty attending his cauſe on this ſubject. His method of meeting it is not by ſoberly examining the agreement or diſagreement of prophecy and hiſtory: that would not have ſuited his purpoſe: but, as though he had made a wonderful diſcovery, he in the firſt place goes about to prove that the prophets wrote *poetry*; and from hence would perſuade us that a prophet was no other than an ancient Jewiſh bard. That the prophecies are what is now called poetic, Mr. Paine need nothave given himſelf the trouble to prove, as no perſon of common underſtanding can doubt it; but the queſtion is did not theſe writings, in whatever kind of language they were written, contain *predictions of future events*; yea and of the moſt notorious and remarkable events, ſuch as ſhould form the grand out-lines of hiſtory in the following ages? Mr. Paine will not deny this; nor will he ſoberly undertake to diſprove that many of thoſe events have already come to paſs. He will, however, take a ſhorter method; a method more ſuited to his turn of mind. He will call the prophets "impoſ-"tors and liars:" he will roundly aſſert without a ſhadow of proof, and in defiance of hiſtoric evidence, that the prediction con-

cerning Cyrus was written after the event took place; he will labor to pervert and explain away ſome few of the prophecies, and get rid of the reſt by calling the writer "a "falſe prophet," and his production "a book "of falſehoods." * Theſe are weapons worthy of Mr. Paine's warfare. But why all this rage againſt an ancient bard? Juſt now a prophet was only a poet, and the idea of a predictor of future events was not included in the meaning of the term. It ſeems however, by this time, that Mr. Paine has found a number of *predictions* in the prophetic writings, to get rid of which he is obliged. as is uſual with him in caſes of emergency, to ſummon all his talents for miſrepreſentation and abuſe.

I take no particular notice of this writer's attempts to explain away a few of the predictions of Iſaiah, and other prophets. Thoſe who have undertaken to anſwer him have performed this part of the buſineſs. I ſhall only notice that he has not dared to meet the great body of ſcripture prophecy, or fairly to look it in the face.

To ſay nothing of the predictions of the deſtruction of mankind by a flood; of that of Sodom and Gommorrah by fire; of the deſcendants of Abraham being put in poſſeſſion of Canaan within a limited period; and of various other events, the hiſtory as well as prophecy of which is confined to the

* *Age of Reaſon*, Part II. p, 53, 44, 47.

ſcriptures ; let us review thoſe predictions, the fulfilment of which has been recorded by hiſtorians who knew nothing of them, and conſequently could have no deſign in their favor.

It is worthy of notice, that ſacred hiſtory ends where profane hiſtory, that part of it at leaſt which is commonly rekoned authentic, begins. Prior to the Babyloniſh Captivity, the ſcriptural writers were in the habit of narrating the leading events of their country, and of incidentally introducing thoſe of the ſurrounding nations : but ſhortly after this time the great changes in the world began to be recorded by other hands, as *Herodotus*, *Xenophon*, and others. From this period they dealt chiefly in prophecy, leaving it to common hiſtorians to record its fulfilment.

Mr. Paine ſays the ſcripture prophecies are "a book of falſehoods." Let us examine this charge. Iſaiah, above a hundred years before the Captivity, predicted the deſtruction of the Babyloniſh Empire by the Medes and Perſians, and Judah's conſequent deliverance. *The plunderer is plundered, and the deſtroyer is deſtroyed : Go up O Elam : beſiege O Media : all the crying thereof have I made to ceaſe.* * Aſk *Herodotus* and *Xenophon ;* Was this falſehood?

* Lowth's tranſlation of Iſaiah, xxi, 2. Other prophecies of the ſame event may be ſeen in Iſai. xiii. xv. xxi. xliii. 14—17. xliv. 28. xlv. 1—4. xlvii. Jer. xxv. 12—26. l. li. Hab.

Daniel, fourteen years before the eſtabliſhment of the Medo-Perſian dominion by the taking of Babylon, deſcribed that dominion, with its conqueſts, and the ſuperiority of the Perſian influence to that of the Median, under the ſymbol of a ram with two horns. *I lifted up mine eyes and ſaw, and behold there ſtood by the river a ram, which had two horns; and the two horns were high, and the higher came up laſt. I ſaw the ram puſhing weſtward and northward, and ſouthward; ſo that no beaſts might ſtand before him, neither was there any that could deliver out of his hand; but he did according to his will, and became great.* This is expounded as follows: *The ram which thou ſaweſt having two horns are the kings of Media and Perſia.* † Aſk the afore-mentioned hiſtorians; Was this a falſehood?

The ſame Daniel, at the ſame time, two hundred and twenty-three years before the event, predicted the overthrow of this Medo-Perſian dominion, by the arms of Greece, under the command of Alexander; and deſcribed the latter government under the ſymbol of a he-goat, with a notable horn between his eyes. *As I was conſidering, behold a he-goat came from the weſt, on the face of the whole earth, and he touched not the ground. And the goat had a notable horn between his eyes. And he came to the ram that had two horns, which I had ſeen ſtanding by the river and ran unto*

† Dan. viii. 3, 4, 20. See alſo on the ſame ſubject Chap. vii. 5.

him in the fury of his power. And I saw him come close unto the ram, and he was moved with choler against him, and smote the ram, and brake his two horns. And there was no power in the ram to stand before him; but he cast him down to the ground, and stamped upon him; and there was none that could deliver the ram out of his hand. The exposition of this vision follows: *The rough goat is the kingdom or power of Grecia: and the great horn that is between his eyes is the first king.** Ask *Diodorus Siculus, Plutarch,* and other historians of those times; Was this a falsehood?

The same Daniel, at the same time, two hundred and thirty years before the event, predicted the death of Alexander, and the division of his Empire amongst four of his principal Commanders, each of whom had an extensive dominion. *The he-goat waxed very great: and when he was strong the great horn was broken; and for it came up four notable ones towards the four winds of heaven.* The interpretation of this was as follows: *Now the great horn being broken, whereas four stood up for it, four kingdoms shall stand up out of the nation, but not in his power.*†—Ask the afore-mentioned historians of those times: Was this a falsehood?

The same Daniel, at the same time, three

* Dan. viii. 8—6, 21. See also on the same subject, Chap. xi. 2, 3, 4.

† Dan. viii. 8, 22. See also on the same subject, Chap. vii. 6.

hundred and eighty years before the event, foretold the outrageous reign and ſudden death of *Antiochus Epiphanes*, king of Syria: particularly, that by flattery and treachery he ſhould accompliſh his end; and, on account of the degeneracy of the Jews, ſhould be permitted for a time to ravage their country, interrupt their ordinary courſe of worſhip, profane their temple, and perſecute even to death thoſe who refuſed to comply with his heathen abominations: but that in the midſt of his career he ſhould be cut off by a ſudden viſitation from heaven. *And out of one of them* (the four branches of the Grecian empire) *came forth a little horn, which waxed exceeding great, toward the ſouth, and toward the eaſt, and toward the pleaſant land. And it waxed great even to the hoſt of heaven: and it caſt down ſome of the hoſt, and of the ſtars to the ground, and ſtamped upon them. Yea, he magnified himſelf even to the prince of the hoſt, and by him the daily ſacrifice was taken away, and the place of his ſanctuary was caſt down. And a hoſt was given him againſt the daily ſacrifice, by reaſon of tranſgreſſion, and it caſt down the truth to the ground; and it practiſed and proſpered.* Of this the following is the expoſition: *In the latter time of their kingdom, when the tranſgreſſors are come to the full, a king of fierce countenance, and underſtanding dark ſentences, ſhall ſtand up. And his power ſhall be mighty, but not by his own power: and he ſhall deſtroy wonderfully, and ſhall proſper*

and practiſe, and ſhall deſtroy the mighty and the holy people. And through his policy alſo he ſhall cauſe craft to proſper in his hand; and he ſhall magnify himſelf in his heart, and by peace ſhall deſtroy many: and he ſhall alſo ſtand up againſt the prince of princes; but he ſhall be broken without hand.

Daniel alſo foretells, in the eleventh Chapter of his prophecies, the wars between this king of Syria and *Ptolemy Philometer*, king of Egypt; with the interpoſition of the Romans, whoſe ambaſſador ſhould come over in *ſhips from Chittim*, and compel him to deſiſt: alſo that being thus diſappointed of his object in Egypt, he ſhould return full of wrath and indignation to his own land, and wreak his vengeance upon the Jews, whoſe country lay in his way, though they had done nothing to offend him. I will not ſay, aſk *Joſephus*, *Diodorus*, *Siculus*, and *Polybius*, if theſe were falſehoods; aſk *Porphyry*, a profeſſed enemy to the Holy Scriptures, both of the Old and New Teſtament, and who wrote againſt them about the middle of the third Century. He has proved from the teſtimony of ſix or ſeven hiſtorians of thoſe times, that theſe predictions were all exactly fulfilled: and like Mr. Paine, by the prophecies concerning Cyrus, is driven, *merely on account of their being true*, to fly in the face of hiſtoric evidence, and maintain that they could not be the production of Daniel, but muſt have been written by ſome Jew after the events took place.*

* See *Predeaux's Connexion*, Part I. Book II. VIII. Part

As in the eighth and eleventh chapters of his prophecies Daniel has foretold the Perſian and Grecian governments, with the ſubdiviſions of the latter, and how they ſhould affect the Jewiſh people; ſo in the ſeventh chapter he has, in connexion with them, foretold the government of *Rome*. This ſingular empire he repreſents as exceeding all that had gone before it, in power and terror; and as that of Greece, ſoon after the death of Alexander, ſhould be divided into four kingdoms, ſignified by the four heads of the third beaſt, ſo this, it is foretold, ſhould be, at the time of its diſſolution, divided into ten kingdoms, which are ſignified by the ten horns of the fourth beaſt. Aſk univerſal hiſtory, Is this a falſehood? Thoſe who adopt the cauſe of Porphyry muſt in this inſtance deſert his hypotheſis: they cannot ſay that this part of the prophecy was written by ſome Jew after the event took place, ſeeing Porphyry himſelf has acknowledged its exiſtence ſome hundreds of years before it was accompliſhed.

The predictions of this prophet did not end here; he at the ſame time foretold that there ſhould ariſe among the ten kingdoms, into which the Roman empire ſhould be broken, a power diverſe from all the reſt; *a little horn* which ſhould *ſpeak great words againſt the Moſt High, and wear out the ſaints of the Moſt High;* and that this power ſhould

II. Book III. where the accompliſhment of all the foregoing events is clearly narrated, and the authorities cited.

continue until *a time, and times, and the dividing of time.* At the end of this period, he adds, *the judgment ſhall ſit, and they ſhall take away his dominion, to conſume and to deſtroy unto the end.* Are theſe falſehoods? Let the hiſtory of the laſt twelve hundred years, and the preſent ſtate of the Papal hierarchy, determine.

Paſſing over the predictions of the Meſſiah, whoſe birth, place of nativity, time of appearance, manner of life, doctrine, miracles, death, and reſurrection, were each particularly pointed out,* let us examine a few examples from the New Teſtament. Our Lord Jeſus Chriſt foretold the deſtruction of Jeruſalem by the Romans, and limited the time of its accompliſhment to the then *preſent generation.*† Aſk Joſephus, the Jewiſh hiſtorian, Is this a falſehood?

It was intimated at the ſame time, that the Jewiſh people ſhould not only fall by the edge of the ſword, but that great numbers of them ſhould be *led away captive into all nations*; and that *Jeruſalem ſhould be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the gentiles ſhould be fulfilled.*‡ Aſk the preſent deſcendants of that unhappy people, Is this a falſehood?

The apoſtle of the Gentiles foretold that there ſhould be *a falling away*, or a grand

* Iſai. ix. 6. Mic. v. 2. Dan. ix. 20—27. Iſai. xlii. 2. xxxv. 5, 6. liii. Pſ. xvi. 10, 11.

† Matt. xxiv. 1—35. Luke xxi.

‡ Luke xxi. 24.

apoſtacy in the chriſtian church; wherein *the man of ſin ſhould be revealed, even the ſon of perdition; who would oppoſe, and exalt himſelf above all that is called God, or that is worſhipped; and who as God would ſit in the temple of God, ſhewing himſelf to be God.** Alſo in his epiſtle to Timothy: *Now the ſpirit ſpeaketh expreſsly, that in the latter times ſome ſhall give heed to ſeducing ſpirits, and doctrines of devils; ſpeaking lies in hypocriſy, having their conſciences ſeared with a hot iron; forbidding to marry, and commanding to abſtain from meats which God hath created to be received with thankſgiving of them who believe and know the truth.*†

A large proportion of the Apocalypſe of John reſpects this grand apoſtaſy, and the corrupt community in which it was accompliſhed. He deſcribes it with great variety of expreſſion. On ſome accounts it is repreſented under the form of a *city*, on others of a *beaſt*, and on others of a *woman ſitting upon a beaſt*. That we might be at no loſs to diſtinguiſh it on its appearance, it is intimated that it ſhould not be ſo much a civil as an apoſtate eccleſiaſtical power: It is a *harlot*, oppoſed to the bride the Lamb's wife; —that it ſhould greatly abound in wealth, and worldly grandeur: *The woman was arrayed in purple and ſcarlet, and decked with gold, and precious ſtones, and pearls*:—that its dominion ſhould not be confined to its

* 2 Theſ. ii. 3, 4. † 2 Tim. iv. 1, 2, 3.

own immediate territories: *Power was given it over all kingdoms, and tongues, and nations:*—that its authority ſhould not be derived from its own conqueſts, but from the voluntary conſent of a number of independent kingdoms to come under its yoke:—*The kings of the earth have one mind, and ſhall give their power and ſtrength unto the beaſt:*—that it ſhould be diſtinguiſhed by its blaſphemies, idolatries, and perſecuting ſpirit: *Upon her were the names of blaſphemy.*—*They ſhould make an image of the beaſt, and as many as would not worſhip the image of the beaſt were to be killed. And the woman was drunk with the blood of the ſaints:* that its perſecutions ſhould extend to ſuch a length as for no man to be allowed the common rights of men, unleſs he become ſubject to it: *No man might buy or ſell, ſave he that had the mark, or the name of the beaſt, or the number of his name:*—that its power ſhould continue for *a time, times, and half a time, forty and two months, or one thouſand two hundred and ſixty days;* during which long period God's witneſſes ſhould propheſy in ſackcloth, be driven as into a wilderneſs, and, as it were, ſlain, and their bodies lie unburied: finally, that they who gave it an exiſtence ſhould be the inſtruments of taking it away: *The kings,* or powers, *of the earth ſhall hate the whore, and burn her fleſh with fire.** Whether all, or any part of this be

* Rev. xi, xiii. and xvii. Chapters.

falfehood, let hiftory and obfervation determine.

It has often been obferved that the prophecies of the Meffiah were fo numerous and explicit, that at the time of his appearance there was a general expectation of it, not only in Judea, but in all the neighboring nations; and is not the fame thing obfervable at this time of the fall of Antichrift, the converfion of the Jews, and the general fpread of the gofpel?

Once more, The facred writers have predicted the oppofition which Chriftianity fhould meet with, and defcribed the characters from whom it fhould proceed. *In the laft days*, fay they, *perilous times will come, for men fhall be lovers of their own felves, covetous, boafters, proud, blafphemers, difobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, truce-breakers, falfe accufers, incontinent, fierce, defpifers of thofe that are good, traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleafures more than lovers of God.* Again, *There fhall be mockers in the laft time, who fhall walk after their own ungodly luffs; filthy dreamers, who defile the flefh, defpife dominion, and fpeak evil of dignities; raging waves of the fea, foaming out their own fhame; wandering ftars, to whom is referved the blacknefs of darknefs for ever.** Let Mr. Paine, and other infidels, confider well the above picture, and afk their own confciences—Is this a falfehood?

* Tim. iii. 1—4. Jude.

Biſhop Newton, in his *Diſſertations*, has clearly evinced the fulfilment of ſeveral of theſe and other ſcripture prophecies; and has ſhewn that ſome of them are fulfilling at this day. To thoſe *Diſſertations* I refer the reader. Enough has been ſaid to enable us to determine which production it is that deſerves to be called "a book of falſehoods," the prophecies of Scripture, or the *Age of Reaſon.*

CHAP. II.

The harmony of Scripture with truth, evinced from its agreement with the dictates of an enlightened conſcience, and the reſult of the cloſeſt obſervation.

IF a brazen mirror were found on ſome remote uninhabited iſland, it might be a doubtful matter how it came thither; but if it properly reflected objects, there could be no doubt of its being a real mirror.

The Bible was written with the profeſſed deſign of being *profitable for reproof;* nor was there ever a book ſo adapted to the purpoſe, or ſo effectual in its operation in diſcloſing the inward workings of the human mind. Thouſands can bear witneſs from experience that it is *quick and powerful, ſharper than any two edged ſword, piercing even to the dividing aſunder of ſoul and ſpirit, and a diſcerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.* Its entrance into the mind giveth light: and light which diſcovers the works of darkneſs. Far from flattering the vices of mankind, it charges, without ceremony, every ſon of Adam with poſſeſſing the heart of an apoſtate. This charge it brings home to the conſcience, not only by its pure precepts, and awful threatenings, but oftentimes by the very invitations and promiſes of mercy; which, while they cheer the heart with live-

ly hope, carry *conviction* by their *import* to the very ſoul. In reading other books you may admire the ingenuity of the writer; but here your attention is turned inward. Read it but ſeriouſly, and your heart will anſwer to its deſcriptions. It will touch the ſecret ſprings of ſenſibility; and if you have any ingenuouſneſs of mind towards God, the tears of grief, mingled with thoſe of hope and gratitude, will, ere you are aware, trickle from your eyes.

Whatever particular vices you may have been addicted to, here you will diſcover your likeneſs; and that not as by a comic repreſentation on the theatre, which, where it reclaims one perſon by ſhaming him out of his follies, corrupts a thouſand; but in a way that will bring conviction to your boſom.

Come ſee a man that told me all things that ever I did, is not this the Chriſt?—Such was the reaſoning of the woman of Samaria; and who could have reaſoned better? That which makes manifeſt muſt be light.—But this reaſoning is applicable to other things as well as the Meſſiahſhip of Jeſus. No man can forbear ſaying of that book, that doctrine, or that preaching which tells him all things that ever he did, Is not this the truth? The ſatisfaction afforded by ſuch evidence approaches near to intuitive certainty: It is having the witneſs in ourſelves.

Should it be objected that though this may ſatisfy our own minds, yet it can afford no evidence to others—I anſwer, It is true

that they who ſhun the light cannot be ſuppoſed to poſſeſs that evidence of its being what it is, as thoſe who have come to it that their deeds may be made manifeſt: yet even they, if at all acquainted with the Bible, muſt be aware that the likneſſes which it draws are in a conſiderable degree their own.—It is not to ſerious Chriſtians only that the goſpel is a mirror. Many who never look into that perfect law of liberty from choice and delight, ſo as to be bleſſed in their work, but only glance at it in a tranſient and occaſional way, yet perceive ſo much of their own character in it, as to be convinced that it is right, and that they are wrong. The ſecret conviction of thouſands who hear the word, and do it not, reſembles that of Pharaoh, *The Lord is righteous, and I and my people are wicked.* The impreſſions of ſuch people, it is true, are frequently ſhort in their duration: like a man who ſeeth his natural face in a glaſs, they go away, and ſtraightway forget what manner of perſons they are: but the averſion which they diſcover to a ſerious reſumption of the ſubject, places it beyond all reaſonable doubt, that, let their hearts be as they may, the Scriptures have commended themſelves to their conſciences. They have felt the point of this two-edged ſword, and are not diſpoſed to renew the encounter. That this is the caſe, not only with nominal Chriſtians, but with great numbers of profeſſed deiſts, is manifeſt from the acknowledgements of ſuch men as *the Earl of*

Rocheſter, and many others who have relented on the near approach of death. This is often a time in which conſcience muſt and will be heard; and, too often for the liking of ſurviving acquaintances, it proclaims to the world, that the grand ſource of their hatred to the Bible has been that for which Ahab hated Micaiah, its propheſying no good concerning them.

The Scriptures are a mirror in which we ſee not only individual characters, our own and others, but the ſtate of things as they move on in the great world. They ſhew us the ſpring-head whence all the malignant ſtreams of idolatry, atheiſm, corruption, perſecution, war, and every other evil originate; and by ſhewing us the origin of theſe deſtructive maladies, clearly inſtruct us where-in muſt conſiſt their cure.

It has already been obſerved* that Chriſtian morality is ſummed up in the love of God and our neighbor, and that theſe principles, carried to their full extent, would render the world a paradiſe. But the Scriptures teach us that man is a rebel againſt his Maker; that his carnal mind is enmity againſt God, and is not ſubject to the law of God, neither indeed can be; that inſtead of loving God, or even man in the order which is required, men are become *lovers of their own ſelves*, and neither God nor man are regarded but as they are found neceſſary to ſubſerve their wiſhes.

* Part I. chap. III.

This ſingle principle of human apoſtaſy ſuppoſing it to be true, will fully account for all the moral diſorders in the world; and the actual exiſtence of thoſe diſorders, unleſs they can be better accounted for, muſt go to prove the truth of this principle, and, by conſequence, of the Chriſtian ſyſtem which reſts upon it.

We are affected in conſidering the *idolatry* of ſo great a part of the human race; but we are not ſurpriſed at it. If men be deſtitute of the love of God, it is natural to ſuppoſe they will endeavor to baniſh him from their thoughts, and, provided the ſtate of ſociety will admit of it, from their worſhip; ſubſtituting gods more congenial with their inclinations, and in the worſhip of which they can indulge themſelves without fear or control.

Neither are we ſurpriſed at the *practical atheiſm* which abounds among unbelievers, and even among nominal Chriſtians, in European nations. If the ſtate of things be ſuch that groſs idolatry is inadmiſſible, ſtill, if adverſion to God predominate, it will ſhew itſelf in a neglect of all worſhip, and of all ſerious converſation, or devout exerciſes; in a wiſh to think there is no God, and no hereafter; and in endeavors to baniſh every thing of a religious nature from ſociety. Or, if this cannot be, and any thing relating to ſuch ſubjects become matter of diſcuſſion, they will be ſo explained away as that nothing ſhall be left which can approve itſelf

to an upright heart. The holineſs of the divine character will be kept out of ſight, his precepts diſregarded, and morality itſelf made to conſiſt in ſomething deſtitute of all true virtue.

We are not ſurpriſed at the *corruptions* which Chriſtianity has undergone. Chriſtianity itſelf, as we have already ſeen, foretold it, and the doctrine of human depravity fully accounts for it. When the Chriſtian religion was adopted by the ſtate, it is natural to ſuppoſe there would be great numbers of unprincipled men who would profeſs it; and where its leading characters in any age are of this deſcription, it will certainly be corrupted. The pure doctrine of Chriſt is given up in favour of ſome fleſh-pleaſing ſyſtem, the holy precepts of Chriſtian morality are lowered to the ſtandard of ordinary practice, and the worſhip and ordinances of Chriſt mingled with ſuperſtition, and modelled to a worldly temper. It was thus that Judaiſm was corrupted by the old Phariſees, and Chriſtianity by the papal hierarchy.

The ſucceſs which *evil men and ſeducers* meet with, in propagating falſe doctrine, is no more than may be expected from the preſent ſtate of things. So long as a large proportion of the profeſſors of Chriſtianity receive not the love of the truth, error will be certain to meet with a welcome reception. The groſſeſt impoſtor has only to advance a ſyſtem ſuited to corrupt nature, to aſſert it with effrontery, and to flatter his adherets

with being the favourites of heaven, and he will be followed.*

The *perſecutions* which have been carried on againſt religion are grievous to humanity, and equally repugnant to juſtice and to good policy: but they are not in the leaſt ſurpriſing. There was not a truth more prominent in our Saviour's addreſſes to his followers than this, that having *received his word, the world would hate them! becauſe they were not of the world, as he was not of the world.* When he ſent them forth to preach the goſpel, it was *as ſheep among wolves*; and they were treated accordingly. When he took leave of them previous to his death, he left them his *peace*, as knowing that in the world they ſhould have tribulation. All this was no more than might be expected: for if it be the character of true religion that it ſets itſelf againſt every vicious propenſity of the human heart, it is natural to ſuppoſe

* Men are much more eaſily deceived in theſe matters, than in the ordinary concerns of life. If a London merchant were to open a warehouſe in different parts of the city, and make it his buſineſs to traduce the characters and commodities of all other merchants; if his oppoſition were directed eſpecially againſt men of probity and eminence, whoſe ſituations were contiguous to his own; in fine, if the only traders in the kingdom who could obtain his good word were certain agents who he had ſtationed in different parts of the country for the purpoſe of retailing his wares, would not his deſigns be evident? He might puff, and pretend to have the good of the public much at heart; but the public would deſpiſe him as a man whoſe object was a fortune, and whoſe practices evinced that he would heſitate at no means to accompliſh his end. Yet ſuch deceptions may be practiſed in religion with ſucceſs.

that every one who is under the dominion of ſuch propenſity will feel averſe to true religion, and to thoſe who adhere to it. The manner in which mankind have ſtood affected towards godly men has been nearly uniform from the beginning. Cain ſlew his brother. And wherefore ſlew he him? becauſe his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous. Sarah ſaw the ſon of Hagar the Egyptian, mocking: As then he that was born after the fleſh perſecuted him that was born after the ſpirit, even ſo it is now. —Why was Jeruſalem a burdenſome ſtone to the nations? Why were they continually forming leagues to root out its remembrance from the earth? The ſame ſpirit that was diſcovered by Edom, Moab, and the children of Ammon towards Iſrael, was apparent in Sanballat, Tobiah, Geſhem, and their companions, towards Judah; and the part acted by the Honorite, the Ammonite, and the Arabian, was afterwards re-acted with additional zeal by Herod and Pontius Pilate, and the governors and people of Iſrael. Thoſe who could agree in nothing elſe could agree in this. The perſecutions of Pagan and Papal Rome, and of all who have ſymbolized with her, have been only a continuation of the ſame ſyſtem: and the deſcriptions which deiſtical hiſtorians give of theſe works of darkneſs, notwithſtanding their pretended regard to religious liberty, bear witneſs that they allow the deeds of their fathers, and inherit their diſpoſitions.

The ſame malignant ſpirit which was diſcovered by the heathens towards the ancient Iſraelites, is diſcoverable in all the writings of unbelievers towards that people to this day. It is true they are more reconciled to the modern Jews; and for a very plain reaſon: they feel them to be near a-kin to themſelves. Herod and Pilate were made friends by the crucifixion of Chriſt. Since that time the old enmity has been transferred to believing gentiles, who being grafted into the Jewiſh olive, and partaking of its advantages, partake alſo of its perſecutions: and by how much the Chriſtian church at any period has exceeded the Jewiſh in purity and ſpirituality, by ſo much more fierce has the wrath of a wicked world burned againſt it.

After all the pains which unbelievers take to ſhift the charge of perſecution, and to lay it at the door of Chriſtianity, it is manifeſt to an obſervant eye that there is a deep-rooted enmity in all wicked men, whether they be pagans, papiſts, proteſtants, or deiſts, towards all godly men, of every nation, name, and denomination. This enmity, it is true, is not ſuffered to operate according to its native tendency. He who holdeth the winds in his hand, reſtrains it.—Men are withheld by laws, by policy, by intereſts, by education, by reſpect, by regard founded on other than religious qualities, and by various other things. There are certain conjunctions of intereſts, eſpecially, which occaſionally require a temporary ceſſation of

hoſtilities; and it may ſeem, on ſuch occaſions, as if wicked men were aſhamed of their animoſities, and were, all on a ſudden, become friendly to the followers of Chriſt.—Thus, at the Revolution in 1688, thoſe who, for more than twenty years, had treated the non-conformiſts with unrelenting ſeverity, when they found themſelves in danger of being deprived of their places by a popiſh prince, courted their friendſhip, and promiſed not to perſecute them any more.—And thus, at the commencement of the French Revolution, deiſts, catholics, and proteſtants, who were engaged in one political cauſe, ſeemed to have forgotten their reſentments, all amicably uniting together in the opening of a place for proteſtant worſhip. But let not the ſervants of Chriſt imagine that any temporary conjunction of intereſts will extinguiſh the ancient enmity, It may ſeem to be ſo for a time: and all things being under the controul of Providence, ſuch a time may be deſigned as a ſeaſon of reſpite for the faithful; but when ſelf-intereſt hath gained its end, if other worldly conſiderations do not interpoſe, things will return to their former channel. The enmity is not dead, but ſleepeth.

Finally, the *wars* which from the earlieſt period of hiſtory have deſolated the earth, grievous as they are to a feeling mind, contain in them nothing ſurpriſing. The Scriptures, with ſingular propriety, deſcribe the world as *a great Sea*, which is ever caſting

up its mire and dirt; and great conquerors as ſo many *wild beaſts*, which, in ſucceſſion, riſe from its troubled waters, and devour the inhabitants of the earth.* Nor is this all: they deſcribe not only the fact, but the cauſe of it. Wars among men, as hath been already ſtated,† have their *immediate* cauſes in *the luſts which war in their members*: but beſides this, the ſcripture leads us to a cauſe more remote, and of ſtill greater importance. They denominate the ſword of war, *the ſword of the Lord*, and conſtantly intimate that it is one of thoſe means by which he *pleadeth with all fleſh*. A part of the curſe entailed on men, for their departure from the living God, conſiſts in this, that, till they return to him, they ſhall not be able, for any length of time, to maintain amity among themſelves. It appears to be one of thoſe laws by which God governs the world, that PEOPLE ENGAGED IN AN EVIL CAUSE, HOWEVER HARMONIOUS THEY MAY BE IN THE OUTSET, SHALL PRESENTLY BE AT VARIANCE. Thus it was between Abimelech and the men of Shechem, as Jotham had forwarned them in his parable. Tho' at firſt they appeared to rejoice in each other; yet in a little time *fire came out from Abimelech and devoured the men of Shechem, and fire came out from the men of Shechem and devoured Abimelech.*‡ Such is commonly the iſſue of all unprincipled confederacies,

* Dan. vii. † Part I. Chap. VII. ‡ Judges ix.

traitorous conſpiracies, illegal combinations, and illicit amours. Union, in order to be laſting, requires to be cemented with honor. Where this is wanting, however appearances may, for a while, be flattering, all will prove tranſitory: mutual jealouſies will produce mutual enmities, which are certain to iſſue in confuſion and every evil work. Theſe remarks are no leſs applicable to the whole human race, than to particular parts of it. Men have revolted from God; and yet think to live in harmony amongſt themſelves.—God, in juſt judgment, appears to have determined the contrary; and that till they return to him, they ſhall be given up to an evil ſpirit towards each other, and to the ravages of a ſucceſſion of ambitious leaders, who ſhall deſtroy them, in great numbers, from the face of the earth. It is morally impoſſible, indeed, that it ſhould be otherwiſe: for the ſame principle which induces them to renounce the divine government, diſſolves the bands of human ſociety. Supreme ſelf-love is the origin of both; and is ſufficient to account for all the diſorder in the univerſe.

Candid Reader, review the ſubject of this Chapter. In the laſt we traced the agreement of the Holy Scriptures, with hiſtoric fact; in this we have ſeen their correſpondence with *living truth*, or with *things as they actually exiſt in the mind, and in the world.* Similar arguments might alſo have been drawn from the characters of believers

and unbelievers. Not many wiſe, not many mighty, not many noble were called in the early ages of Chriſtianity; and it has been the ſame in every age. To the Jews the goſpel was, from the firſt, a ſtumbling-block, and to philoſophers fooliſhneſs; and ſuch it continues to this day. The exiſtence of the Jews, as a diſtinct people—their diſperſion—their attachment to the Old Teſtament, and rejection of the New—their expectation of a Meſſiah—their acknowledgement of the truth of the hiſtorical facts concerning our Lord—the malignity of their ſpirit—in a word, their exact reſemblance, even at this remote period, to the picture drawn of them in the New Teſtament, are facts which cannot be controverted. Judge impartially: Is there any thing in all this that bears the marks of impoſture? A connoiſſeur will diſtinguiſh between paintings taken from life, and ſuch as are the mere work of imagination. An accurate judge of moral painting will do the ſame. If the Scriptures give falſe deſcriptions of men and things; if they flattered the vices of mankind, or exhibited the moral ſtate of the world contrary to well-known fact, you will conclude them to be a work of falſehood. On the other hand, If they ſpeak of things as they are; if conſcience echo to their charges, and fact comport with their repreſentations, they muſt have been taken from life; and you muſt conclude them to be, what they profeſs to be, *a work of truth.* And ſince the objects

deſcribed are many of them beyond the ken of human obſervation, you muſt conclude that they are not only a work of truth, but, what they alſo profeſs to be, *the true ſayings of God.*

CHAP. III.

The harmony of Scripture with its own profeſſions, argued from the ſpirit and ſtyle in which it is written.

IF the Scriptures be what they profeſs to be, the word of God, it may be preſumed that the ſpirit which they breathe, and even the ſtyle in which they are compoſed, will be different from what are found in any other productions. It is true, that, having been communicated through human mediums, we may expect them in a meaſure to be humanized; the peculiar turn and talents of each writer will be viſible, and this will give them the character of variety; but amidſt all this variety, a mind capable of diſcerning the divine excellence, will plainly perceive in them the finger of God.

With reſpect to *ſtyle*, though it is not on the natural, but the moral, or rather the *holy* beauties of Scripture that I would lay the principal ſtreſs; yet ſomething may be obſerved of the other. So far as the beauty of language conſiſts in its freedom from affectation, and in its conformity to the nature of the ſubject, it may be expected that a book written by holy men, inſpired by God, will be poſſeſſed of this excellence. A divinely inſpired production will not only be free from ſuch blemiſhes as ariſe from vanity,

and other evil diſpoſitions of the mind, but will abound in thoſe beauties which never fail to attend the genuine exerciſes of modeſty, ſenſibility, and godly ſimplicity. It will reject the meretricious ornaments of art: but it will poſſeſs the more ſubſtantial beauties of nature. That this is true of the Scriptures has been proved by ſeveral able writers.*

Mr. Paine, however, can ſee nothing great, majeſtic, or worthy of God, in any part of the Bible. Among the numerous terms of reproach with which he honors it, he is pleaſed to cenſure the writings of Iſaiah as "bombaſt, beneath the genius of a ſchool-boy;" and to compare the command of the great Creator, in the firſt chapter of Geneſis, *Let there be light*, to the "imperative manner of ſpeaking uſed by a conjuror."† This writer has given us no example of the bombaſt from Iſaiah. Bombaſt is that ſpecies of writing in which great ſwelling words are uſed to convey little ideas. But is it thus in the writings of Iſaiah?—*And one cried to another, ſaying, Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hoſts: the whole earth is full of his glory.—Who hath meaſured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out heaven with a ſpan, and comprehended the duſt of the earth in a*

* See Blackwall's *Sacred Claſſics:* Melmoth's *Sublime and Beautiful of Scripture: to which is added* Dwight's *Diſſertation on the Poetry, Hiſtory, and Eloquence of the Bible.*

† *Age of Reaſon*, Part II. p. 105. Note.

meaſure, and weighed the mountains in ſcales, and the hills in a balance? Who hath directed the Spirit of the Lord, or, being his counſellor, hath taught him?—With whom took he counſel, and who inſtructed him, and taught him in the path of judgment, and taught him knowledge, and ſhewed unto him the way of underſtanding? Behold, the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the ſmall duſt of the balance: behold, he taketh up the iſles as a very little thing. And Lebanon is not ſufficient to burn, nor the beaſts thereof ſufficient for a burnt-offering. All nations before him are as nothing; and they are counted to him leſs than nothing and vanity. Are the ideas too little in theſe inſtances for the words?—The prophets wrote in a poetic ſtyle; and how could they write otherwiſe? Poetry is the language of paſſion; and ſuch as theirs, of paſſion raiſed and inflamed by great and affecting objects. Their language is not that of common poetry, but, as an elegant writer expreſſes it, "It is the burſt of inſpiration."

As to the objection againſt the ſublimity of the paſſage in the firſt chapter of Geneſis, it is ſufficient to obſerve, that there is nothing, be it ever ſo magnific, and worthy of God, but a profane and ludicrous imagination may diſtort it. A rainbow may be compared to a fiddle-ſtick: but it does not follow that it is an object of equal inſignificance. Thunder and lightning may be imitated by a chaldron and leſs contemptible

than a conjuror: but ſhould any one infer that there is nothing more grand, more awful, and more worthy of God, in theſe diſplays of nature, than in the exhibitions of a country ſhow, he would prove himſelf to be poſſeſſed of but a ſmall portion of either wit or good ſenſe.

I do not pretend to any great judgment in the beauties of compoſition: but there are perſons of far ſuperior judgment to this writer, who have expreſſed themſelves in a very different language. The late SIR WILLIAM JONES, who, for learning and taſte, as well as character, has left but few equals, thus expreſſes himſelf: "I have regularly and attentively read theſe Holy Scriptures, and am of opinion that this Volume, independent of its divine origin, contains more ſublimity and beauty, more pure morality, more important hiſtory, and finer ſtrains of poetry and eloquence, than can be collected from all other books, in whatever age or language they may have been compoſed."

The acknowledgments of ROUSSEAU, likewiſe, whoſe taſte for fine writing, and whoſe freedom from prejudice in favor of Chriſtianity, none will call in queſtion, will ſerve to confront the aſſertions of Mr. Paine. —After declaring that as there were ſome proofs in favor of Revelation which he could not invalidate, ſo there were many objections againſt it which he could not reſolve; that he neither admitted, nor rejected it; and that he rejected only the *obligation* of

ſubmitting to it; he goes on to acknowledge as follows: "I will confeſs to you farther, "that the majeſty of the Scripture ſtrikes "me with admiration, as the purity of the "goſpel has its influence on my heart. Pe- "ruſe the works of our philoſophers, with "all their pomp of diction—how mean— "how contemptible—are they, compared "with the Scripture!—Is it poſſible that a "book, at once ſo ſimple and ſublime, ſhould "be merely the work of man? Is it poſſible "that the ſacred perſonage, whoſe hiſtory it "contains, ſhould be himſelf a mere man? "Do we find that he aſſumed the air of an "enthuſiaſt or ambitious ſectary?—What "ſweetneſs—what purity in his manners!— "What an affecting gracefulneſs in his de- "livery!—What ſublimity in his maxims! "—What profound wiſdom in his diſcours- "es!—What preſence of mind!—What ſub- "tilty!—What truth in his replies!—How "great the command over his paſſions!— "Where is the man—where the philoſo- "pher, who could ſo live and die, without "weakneſs, and without oſtentation?—Shall "we ſuppoſe the Evangelic Hiſtory a mere "fiction?—Indeed, my friend, it bears not "the marks of fiction. On the contrary, the "hiſtory of Socrates, which nobody pre- "ſumes to doubt, is not ſo well atteſted as "that of Jeſus Chriſt. The Jewiſh authors "were incapable of the diction, and ſtrang- "ers to the morality contained in the gos- "pels; the marks of whoſe truth are ſo

" ſtriking and invincible, that the inventor " would be a more aſtoniſhing character than " the hero."*

Rouſſeau's praiſes of the Scriptures remind us of the high encomiums beſtowed by Balaam on the Tabernacles of Iſrael. It is no unuſual thing for men to admire that which they do not love.

Let us examine a little more minutely the *ſpirit* in which the Scriptures are written. It is this which conſtitutes their *holy* beauty, that diſtinguiſhes them from all other writings, and that affords the ſtrongeſt evidence of their being written by inſpiration of God.

In recording hiſtorical events the ſacred writers *invariably eye the hand of God:* in ſome inſtances they entirely overlook ſecond cauſes; and in others, where they are mentioned, it is only as inſtruments, fulfilling the divine will. Events that came to paſs according to the uſual courſe of things, and in which an ordinary hiſtorian would have ſeen nothing divine, are recorded by them amongſt the works of the Lord.—*The Lord was very angry with Iſrael, and removed them out of his ſight. And the Lord ſent againſt Jehoiakim bands of the Chaldees, and bands of the Syrians, and bands of the Moabites, and bands of the children of Ammon, and ſent them againſt Judah to deſtroy it, according to the word of the Lord which he ſpake by his ſervants the prophets. Surely at the command-*

* Works, Vol. V. pp. 215—218.

*ment of the Lord came this upon Judah, to remove them out of his ſight, for the ſins of Manaſſeh, according to all that he did, and alſo for the innocent blood that he ſhed: for he filled Jeruſalem with innocent blood which the Lord would not pardon.**

In their *prophecies*, while they foretold the heavieſt calamities upon nations, their own and others, and viewing the hand of God in all, acquieſced in them; as men they felt tenderly for their fellow-creatures, even for their enemies. *My bowels, my bowels! I am pained at my very heart; my heart maketh a noiſe in me: I cannot hold my peace, becauſe thou haſt heard, O my ſoul, the ſound of the trumpet, the alarm of war.—O thou ſword of the Lord, how long will it be ere thou be quiet? Put up thyſelf into thy ſcabbard, reſt, and be ſtill.*† When Iſrael was expoſed to calamities, all the neighboring nations, who hated them on account of their religion, exulted over them: but when the cup went round to them, the prophets who foretold it were tenderly affected by it. *I will bewail with the weeping of Jazer the vine of Sibmah: I will water thee with my tears, O Heſhbon, and Elealeh: for the ſhouting for thy ſummer-fruits, and for thy harveſt, is fallen. And gladneſs is taken away, and joy out of the plentiful field; and in the vineyards there ſhall be no ſinging, neither ſhall there be ſhouting: the treaders*

* 2 Kings xvii. 18. xxiv. 2, 3, 4.

† Jer. iv. 19. xlvii. 6.

*ſhall tread out no wine in their preſſes; I have made ſhouting to ceaſe, wherefore my bowels ſhall ſound like an harp for Moab, and mine inward parts for Kir-hareſh.**

The *miracles* which they record are diſtinguiſhed from the ſigns and lying wonders of following ages, in that there is always to be ſeen in them an end worthy of God. The far greater part of them were works of pure compaſſion to the parties; and the whole of them of benevolence to Society.

There is nothing in the Scriptures adapted to gratify *preſumptuous ſpeculation* or *idle curioſity*. Such a ſpirit, on the contrary, is frequently checked, and every thing is directed to the renovation or improvement of the heart. The account given of the creation of the ſun, moon, and ſtars, is not intended, as Mr. *Henry* obſerves, to deſcribe things "as they are in themſelves, and in "their own nature, to ſatisfy the curious; "but as they are in relation to this earth, to "which they ſerve as *lights*; and this is e-"nough to furniſh us with matter for praiſe "and thankſgiving." The miracles of Jeſus were never performed to gratify curioſity. If the afflicted, or any on their behalf, preſent their petition, it is invariably heard and anſwered: but if the phariſees come and ſay, *Maſter, we would ſee a ſign from thee*; or if Herod *hope to ſee a miracle done by him*, it is refuſed.† When one ſaid to him, *Lord*,

* Iſai. xvi. 9—11.

† Matt. xii. 38. Luke xxiii. 8, 9.

are there few that be ſaved? he anſwered—*Strive to enter in at the ſtrait gate: for many, I ſay unto you, will ſeek to enter in, and ſhall not be able.**

There is nothing in the Scriptures tending, in its own nature, to excite *levity* or *folly*. They ſometimes deal in the moſt cutting irony; but it is never for the ſake of diſplaying wit, or raiſing a laugh, but invariably for the accompliſhment of a ſerious and important end. A ſerious mind finds every thing to gratify it, and nothing to offend it: and even the moſt profligate character, unleſs he read them in ſearch of ſomething which he may convert into ridicule, is impreſſed with awe by the pointed and ſolemn manner in which they addreſs him.

It may be ſaid of the Scriptures, and of them only, that they are *free from affectation and vanity*. You may ſometimes find things of this ſort deſcribed by the ſacred writers; but you will never diſcern any ſuch ſpirit in the deſcriptions themſelves. Yet were they, as men, ſubject to human imperfections: if, therefore, they had not been influenced by divine inſpiration, blemiſhes of this kind muſt have appeared in their writings, as well as in thoſe of other men. But in what inſtance have they aſſumed a character which does not belong to them; or diſcovered a wiſh to be thought more religious, more learned, or more accompliſhed in any way

* Luke xiii. 24. See alſo xxi. 5—19.

than they were? Nor were they leſs free from vanity than from affectation. They were as far from making the moſt of what they were, as from aiming to appear what they were not. Inſtead of trumpeting their own praiſe, or aiming to tranſmit their fame to poſterity, ſeveral of them have not ſo much as put their names to their writings; and thoſe who have, are generally out of ſight. As you read their hiſtory, they ſeldom occur to your thoughts.—Who thinks of the Evangeliſts when reading the *four goſpels*; or of Luke while reading the *Acts of the Apoſtles?* Mr. Paine weaves the laurel on his own brows, vainly boaſting that he has "written a book under the greateſt diſadvantages, which no bible believer can anſwer;" and that with his axe upon his ſhoulder, like another Sennacherib, he has paſſed through, and cut down the tall cedars of our Lebanon.* But thus did not the ſacred writers, even with regard to heatheniſm, becauſe of the fear of God.—Paul, in one inſtance, for the ſake of anſwering an important end, was compelled to ſpeak the truth of himſelf, and to appear to boaſt; yet it is eaſy to perceive how much it was againſt his inclination. A *boaſter* and a *fool* were, in his account, ſynonimous terms.†

The ſacred writers, while they reſpect ma-

* *Age of Reaſon*, Part II. Pref. p. vi. and p. 64.

† 2 Cor. xii.

giſtracy, and frown upon faction, tumult, and ſedition, are *never known to flatter the great.* Compare the fuſtian eloquence of Tertullus with the manly ſpeeches of Paul. —Did he flatter Felix? No; he *reaſoned of righteouſneſs, temperance, and judgment to come, and Felix trembled.* Did he flatter Feſtus or even Agrippa? No; the higheſt compliment which proceeded from him was, that *he knew* the latter *to be expert in all cuſtoms and queſtions among the Jews,* and to maintain the divine inſpiration of the prophets; which declaration, with the whole of this admirable apology, contained only the words of truth and ſoberneſs.

They diſcover no *anxiety to guard againſt ſeeming inconſiſtencies,* either with themſelves, or one another. In works of impoſture, eſpecially where a number of perſons are concerned, there is need of great care and caution, leſt one part ſhould contradict another; and ſuch caution is eaſily perceived. But the ſacred writers appear to have had no ſuch concern about them. Conſcious that all they wrote was true, they left it to prove its own conſiſtency. Their productions poſſeſs conſiſtency; but it is not a ſtudied one, nor always apparent at firſt ſight: it is that conſiſtency which is certain to accompany truth.*

* "There is one argument," ſays Mr. *Wilberforce,* in his late excellent Treatiſe, "which impreſſes my mind with par-
"ticular force. This is, the great variety of the *kinds* of evi-
"dence which have been adduced in proof of Chriſtianity,
"and the confirmation thereby afforded of its truth:—the

There is an *inimitable ſimplicity in all their writings, and a feeling ſenſe of what they write.* They come to the point without ceremony or preamble; and having told the truth, leave it without mingling their own reflections. This remark is particularly exemplified by the four evangeliſts in narrating the treatment of their Lord. Writers who had felt leſs, would have ſaid more.

There is ſomething in all they ſay which leaves behind it a ſenſation produced by no

" proof from prophecy—from miracles—from the character " of Chriſt—from that of his apoſtles—from the nature of the " doctrines of Chriſtianity—from the nature and excellence " of her practical precepts—from the accordance we have " lately pointed out between the doctrinal and practical ſyſ- " tem of Chriſtianity, whether conſidered each in itſelf, or in " their mutual relation to each other—from other ſpecies of " internal evidence, afforded in the more abundance. as the " ſacred records have been ſcrutinized with greater care— " from the accounts of cotemporary, or nearly cotemporary " writers—from the impoſſibility of accounting on any other " ſuppoſition, than that of the truth of Chriſtianity, for its " promulgation, and early prevalence: theſe and other lines " of argument have all been brought forward, and urged by " different writers, in proportion as they have ſtruck the " minds of different obſervers more or leſs forcibly. Now " granting that ſome obſcure and illiterate men, reſiding in a " diſtant province of the Roman empire, had plotted to im- " poſe a forgery upon the world; though ſome foundation " for the impoſture might, and indeed muſt, have been at- " tempted to be laid; it ſeems, at leaſt to my underſtanding, " morally impoſſible that ſo many ſpecies of proof, and all ſo " ſtrong, ſhould have lent their concurrent aid, and have united " their joint force in the eſtabliſhment of the falſehood. It may " aſſiſt the reader in eſtimating the value of this argument, to " conſider upon how different a footing, in this reſpect, has " reſted every other religious ſyſtem, without exception, " which was ever propoſed to the world; and indeed every " other hiſtorical fact, of which the truth has been at all con- " teſted."—*Practical View, &c. pp.* 301—368. 3d ed.

other writings; ſomething peculiarly ſuited to the mind when in its moſt ſerious frames, oppreſſed by affliction, or thoughtful about a future life; ſomething which gives melancholy itſelf a charm, and produces tears more delicious to the mind than the moſt high-flavored earthly enjoyments. By what name ſhall I expreſs it? It is *a ſavour of life, a ſavour of God, an unction from the Holy One.*

'Mr. *Paine* can ſee no beauty in the New Teſtament narratives; to him there appears nothing but *impoſture, folly, contradiction, falſehood,* and every thing that marks an evil cauſe. And I ſuppoſe he could ſay the ſame of the things narrated; of the labors, tears, temptations, and ſufferings of the Lord Jeſus, and of every thing elſe in the New Teſtament. Mr. Paine, however, is not the only inſtance wherein men have lacked underſtanding. The Jews ſaw no beauty in the Saviour that they ſhould deſire him: and there are perſons who can ſee no beauty in any of the works of God. Creation is to them a blank. But though *the eyes of a fool are at the ends of the earth,* for want of objects to attract them, yet *wiſdom is before him that underſtandeth.** If Mr. Paine can ſee no beauty in the ſacred pages, it does not follow that there is no beauty to be ſeen. Let any perſon of candour and diſcernment read over the four Evangeliſts, and judge whether they bear the marks of impoſture. If he have

* Proverbs xvii. 24.

any difficulty, it will be in preſerving the character of a critic. Unleſs he be perpetually on his guard, he will inſenſibly loſe ſight of the writers, and be all enamoured of the great object concerning which they write. In reading the nine laſt chapters of John, he will perceive the writer to be deeply affected. Though a long time had elapſed ſince the events had taken place, and he was far advanced in years; yet his heart was manifeſtly overwhelmed with his ſubject. There is reaſon to think that the things which Mr. Paine attempts to ridicule, drew tears from his eyes while he narrated them; as an ingenious mind will find it difficult to review the narrative without ſimilar ſenſations.

Mr. *Paine* is pleaſed to ſay, "Any per-
"ſon that could read and write, might have
"written ſuch a book as the Bible:" but nothing can be farther from the truth. It were ſaying but little, to affirm that *he* could not produce a ſingle page or ſentence that would have a ſimilar effect. Stranger, as he has proved himſelf to be, to the love of God and righteouſneſs, he could not communicate what he does not feel. The croaking raven might as well endeavor to imitate the voice of the dove, or the ſong of the nightingale, as he attempt to emulate the Holy Scriptures. Mr. Paine's ſpirit is ſufficiently apparent in his page, and that of the ſacred writers in theirs. So far from writing as they wrote, he cannot underſtand their writings. That which the Scriptures teach on this ſub-

ject is sufficiently verified in him, and all others of his spirit: *The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, neither can he know them, for they are spiritually discerned.*—As easily might the loveliness of chastity be perceived, or the pleasures of a good conscience appreciated by a debauchee, as the things of God be received by a mind like that of Mr. Paine.

Finally, If the Bible be the word of God, it may be expected that *such an authority, and divine sanction should accompany it*, that while a candid mind shall presently perceive its evidence, those who read it either with negligence or prejudice, shall only be confirmed in their unbelief. It is fit that God's word should not be trifled with. When the pharisees captiously demanded a sign, or miracle, they were sent away without one.—They might go, if they pleased, and report the inability of Jesus to work a miracle.—The evidence attending the resurrection of Christ is of this description. He had exhibited proofs enow of his divine mission publicly, and before the eyes of all men; but seeing they were obstinately rejected, he told his enemies that they should see him no more till he should come on a different occasion:* and they saw him no more. They might insist, if they pleased, that the testimony of his disciples, who witnessed his resurrection, was insufficient. It is thus that

* Matthew xxiii. 39.

hereſies, offences, and ſcandals are permitted in the Chriſtian church, that they who are approved may be made manifeſt; and that occaſion may be furniſhed for them who ſeek occaſion to reproach religion, and perſiſt in their unbelief. If men chooſe deluſion, God alſo will chooſe to give them up to it. *The ſcorner ſhall ſeek wiſdom, and ſhall not find it;* and the word of life ſhall be *a ſavour of death unto death to them that periſh.* Mr. Paine, when he wrote the Firſt Part of his *Age of Reaſon*, was without a Bible. Afterwards, he tells us, he procured one; or to uſe his own ſchool-boy language, "a Bible and a Teſtament; and I have found "them," he adds, "to be much worſe books "than I had conceived."* In all this there is nothing ſurpriſing. On the contrary, if ſuch a ſcorner had found wiſdom, the Scriptures themſelves had not been fulfilled.†

If an inſolent coxcomb had been of opinion that Sir Iſaac Newton was a mere ignoramus in philoſophy, and had gone into his company that he might catechiſe, and afterwards, as occaſion ſhould offer, expoſe him; it is not unlikely that this great writer, perceiving his arrogance, would have ſuffered him to depart without anſwering his queſtions, even tho' he might know at the time that his unfavorable opinion of him would thereby be the more confirmed. Let us but

* *Age of Reaſon*, Part II. Pref. p. xii.

† Proverbs xiv. 6.

come to the Scriptures in a proper ſpirit, and we ſhall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God; but if we approach them in a caviling humour, we may expect not only to remain in ignorance, but to be hardened more and more in unbelief.

CHAP. IV.

The conſiſtency of the Chriſtian doctrine, particularly that of ſalvation through a Mediator, with ſober Reaſon.

IF there be a God who created us; if we have all ſinned againſt him; and if there be reaſon to believe that he will call us to account for our conduct, all which principles are admitted by Mr. *Paine*;* a gloomy proſpect muſt needs preſent itſelf, ſufficient, indeed, to render man "the ſlave of terror." It is not in the power of this writer, nor of any man living, who rejects the Bible, to aſſure us that pardon will have any place in the divine government; and however light he may make of the ſcripture doctrine of hell, He that calls men to account for their deeds will be at no loſs how or where to puniſh them. But allowing that God is diſpoſed to ſhew mercy to the guilty, the queſtion is, Whether his doing ſo by or without a Mediator be moſt conſiſtent with what we know of fitneſs or propriety?

That pardon is beſtowed through a Mediator, in a vaſt variety of inſtances among men, cannot be denied; and that it is proper it ſhould be ſo, muſt be evident to every thinking mind. All who are acquainted

* *Age of Reaſon*, Part I. p. 1. Part II. p. 100.

with the common affairs of life muſt be aware of the neceſſity of ſuch proceedings, and the good effects of them upon ſociety.*

It is far leſs *humbling* for an offender to be pardoned at his own requeſt, than thro' the interpoſition of a third perſon: for in the one caſe he may be led to think that it was his virtue and penitence which influenced the deciſion; whereas in the other he is compelled to feel his own unworthineſs: and this may be one reaſon why the mediation of Chriſt is ſo offenſive. It is no wonder, indeed, that thoſe who deny humility to be a virtue,† ſhould be diſguſted with a doctrine, the profeſſed object of which is to abaſe the pride of man.

As forgiveneſs without a mediator is leſs humbling to the offender, ſo it provides leſs for the *honor* of the offended, than a contrary proceeding. Many a compaſſionate heart has longed to go forth, like David towards Abſalom; but, from a juſt ſenſe of wounded authority, could not tell how to effect it; and has greatly deſired that ſome common friend would interpoſe, and ſave his honor. He has wiſhed to remit the ſentence; but has felt the want of a mediator, at the inſtance of whom he might give effect to his deſires, and exerciſe mercy without ſeeming to be regardleſs of juſtice. An offender who ſhould object to a mediator, would be juſtly conſid-

* See Preſident Edwards's *Remarks on important Theological Controverſies*, Chap. VI.

† Volney's *Law of Nature*, p. 49.

ered as hardened in impenitence, and regardless of the honor of the offended: and it is difficult to say what other construction can be put upon the objections of sinners to the Mediation of Christ.

Again, To exercise pardon without a mediator, would be fixing no such *stigma upon the evil of the offence*, as is done by a contrary mode of proceeding. Every man feels that those faults which may be overlooked on a mere acknowledgment, are not of a very heinous nature: they are such as arise from inadvertence rather than from ill design; and include little more than an error of the judgment. On the other hand, every man feels that the calling in of a third person is making much of the offence, treating it as a serious affair, a breach that is not to be lightly passed over. This may be another reason why the Mediation of Christ is so offensive to the adversaries of the Gospel. It is no wonder that men who are continually speaking of moral evil under the palliating names of *error*, *frailty*, *imperfection*, and the like, should spurn at a doctrine, the implication of which *condemns* * it to everlasting infamy.

Finally, To bestow pardon without a mediator would be treating the offence as *private*, or passing over it as a matter unknown, an affair which does not affect the well-being of society, and which, therefore, requires

* Romans viii. 3.

no public manifeſtation of diſpleaſure againſt it. Many a notorious offender would, doubtleſs, wiſh matters to be thus conducted, and from an averſion to public expoſure, would feel ſtrong objections to the formal interpoſition of a third perſon. Whether this may not be another reaſon of diſlike to the mediation of Chriſt, I ſhall not decide; but of this I am fully ſatisfied, that the want of a proper ſenſe of the great evil of ſin, as it affects the moral government of the univerſe, is a reaſon why its adverſaries ſee no neceſſity for it, nor fitneſs in it. They prove by all their writings that they have no delight in the moral excellency of the divine nature, no juſt ſenſe of the glory of moral government, and no proper views of the pernicious and wide extended influence of ſin upon the moral ſyſtem: Is it any wonder, therefore, that they ſhould be unconcerned about the plague being ſtayed by a ſacrifice? Such views are too enlarged for their ſelfiſh and contracted minds. The only object of their care, even in their moſt ſerious moments, is to eſcape puniſhment: for the honor of God, and the real good of creation, they diſcover no concern. The amount is this: If it be, indeed, improper for a guilty creature to lie low before his Creator: If it be unfit that any regard ſhould be paid to the honor of his character: If the offence committed againſt him be of ſo ſmall account, that it is unneceſſary for him to expreſs any diſpleaſure againſt it; and if it have been ſo private, and inſulated

in its operations, as in no way to affect the well-being of the moral system, the doctrine of forgiveness through a mediator is unreasonable. But if the contrary be true; if it be proper for a guilty creature to lie in the dust before his offended Creator; if the honor of the divine character deserve the first and highest regard; if moral evil be the greatest of all evils, and require, even where it is forgiven, a strong expression of divine displeasure against it: and if its pernicious influence be such that if suffered to operate according to its native tendency, it would dethrone the Almighty, and desolate the universe, the doctrine in question must accord with the plainest dictates of reason.

The sense of mankind, with regard to the necessity of a mediator, may be illustrated by the following similitude. Let us suppose a division in the army of one of the wisest and best of kings, through the evil counsel of a foreign enemy, to have been disaffected to his government; and that without any provocation on his part, they traitorously conspired against his crown and life. The attempt failed; and the offenders were seized, disarmed, tried by the laws of their country, and condemned to die. A respite however was granted to them, during his majesty's pleasure. At this solemn period, while every part of the army, and of the empire, was expecting the fatal order for execution, the king was employed in meditating mercy. But how could mercy be shewn?—

"To make light of a conſpiracy, ſaid he to "his friends, would looſen the bands of good "government: other diviſions of the army "might be tempted to follow their example; "and the nation at large might be in dan- "ger of imputing it to tameneſs, fear, or "ſome unworthy motive."

Every one felt in this caſe the neceſſity of a mediator, and agreed as to the general line of conduct proper for him to purſue. "He "muſt not attempt" ſaid they, "to compro- "miſe the difference by dividing the blame: "That would make things worſe. He muſt "juſtify the king, and condemn the outrage "committed againſt him; he muſt offer, if "poſſible, ſome honourable expedient, by "means of which the beſtowment of pardon "ſhall not relax, but ſtrengthen juſt author- "ity; he muſt convince the conſpirators of "their crime, and introduce them in the "character of ſupplicants; and mercy muſt "be ſhewn them out of reſpect to him, or "for his ſake."

But who could be found to mediate in ſuch a cauſe? This was an important queſ- tion. A work of this kind, it was allowed on all hands, required ſingular qualifica- tions, "He muſt be *perfectly clear of any* "*participation in the offence*," ſaid one, "or "inclination to favour it: for to pardon "conſpirators at the interceſſion of one who "is friendly to their cauſe, would be not "only making light of the crime, but giving "a ſanction to it."

"He muſt," ſaid another, "be one who "on account of his character and ſervices "*ſtands high in the eſteem of the king and of* "*the public*: for to mediate in ſuch a cauſe "is to become, in a ſort, reſponſible for the "iſſue. A mediator in effect pledges his "honour that no evil will reſult to the ſtate "from the granting of his requeſt. But if "a mean opinion be entertained of him, no "truſt can be placed in him, and conſe- "quently no good impreſſion would be made "by his mediation on the public mind."

"I conceive it is neceſſary," ſaid a third, "that the weight of the mediation ſhould "bear a proportion to the magnitude of the "crime, and to the value of the favour re- "queſted; and that for this end it is proper "he ſhould be a perſon of *great dignity*.— "For his majeſty to pardon a company of "conſpirators at the interceſſion of one of "their former comrades or of any other ob- "ſcure character, even though he might be "a worthy man, would convey a very di- "minutive idea of the evil of the offence."

A fourth remarked, that "he muſt profeſs "a *tender compaſſion* towards the unhapy of- "fenders, or he would not cordially intereſt "himſelf on their behalf."

Finally, It was ſuggeſted by a fifth, that "for the greater fitneſs of the proceeding, it "would be proper that ſome *relation* or *con-* "*nection* ſhould ſubſiſt between the parties. "We feel the propriety," ſaid he, "of for- "giving an offence at the interceſſion of a

" father, or a brother; or, if it be commit-
" ted by a ſoldier, of his commanding offi-
" cer. Without ſome kind of previous re-
" lation or connexion, a mediation would
" have the appearance of an arbitrary and
" formal proceſs, and prove but little in-
" tereſting to the hearts of the community.

Such were the reaſonings of the king's friends; but where to find the character in whom theſe qualifications were united, and what particular expedient could be diviſed by means of which, pardon, inſtead of relaxing, ſhould ſtrengthen juſt authority, were ſubjects too difficult for them to reſolve.

Meanwhile the king and his ſon, whom he greatly loved, and whom he had appointed Generaliſſimo of all his forces, had retired from the company, and were converſing about the matter which attracted the general attention.

'My ſon!' ſaid the benevolent Sovereign, 'what can be done in behalf of theſe unhappy men? To order them for execution, 'violates every feeling of my heart: Yet to 'pardon them is dangerous. The army, and 'even the empire would be under a ſtrong 'temptation to think lightly of rebellion.— 'If mercy be exerciſed, it muſt be through 'a mediator; and who is qualified to mediate in ſuch a cauſe? And what expedient 'can be deviſed by means of which pardon 'ſhall not relax, but ſtrengthen juſt authority: Speak, my ſon, and ſay what meaſures 'can be purſued?'

"My Father!" said the prince, "I feel the "insult offered to your person and govern- "ment, and the injury thereby aimed at the "empire at large. They have transgressed "without cause, and deserve to die without "mercy. Yet I also feel for them. I have "the heart of a soldier. I cannot endure to "witness their execution. What shall I say? "On me be this wrong! Let me suffer in "their stead. Inflict on me as much as is "necessary to impress the army and the na- "tion with a just sense of the evil, and of the "importance of good order, and faithful al- "legiance. Let it be in their presence, and "in the presence of all assembled. When "this is done, let them be permitted to im- "plore and receive your majesty's pardon "in my name. If any man refuse so to im- "plore, and to so receive it, let him die the "death!"

"My Son!" replied the king, "You have "expressed my heart! The same things "have occupied my mind; but it was my "desire that you should be voluntary in "the undertaking. It shall be as you have "said. I shall be satisfied; justice itself will "be satisfied; and I pledge my honour that "you also shall be satisfied, in seeing the "happy effects of your disinterested conduct. "Propriety requires that I stand aloof in the "day of your affliction; but I will not leave "you utterly; nor suffer the beloved of my "soul to remain in that condition. A tem- "porary affliction on your part will be more

" than equivalent to death on theirs. The " dignity of your perſon and character will " render the ſufferings of an hour of greater " account as to the impreſſion of the public " mind, than if all the rebellious had been " executed: and by how much I am known " to have loved you, by ſo much will my " compaſſion to them, and my diſpleaſure " againſt their wicked conduct be made man- " iſeſt. Go, my ſon, aſſume the likeneſs of " a criminal, and ſuffer in their place!"

The gracious deſign being communicated at court, all were ſtruck with it. Thoſe who had reaſoned on the qualifications of a mediator ſaw that in the prince all were united, and were filled with admiration: but that he ſhould be willing to ſuffer in the place of rebels was beyond all that could have been aſked or thought. Yet ſeeing he himſelf had generouſly propoſed it, would ſurvive his ſufferings, and reap the reward of them, they cordially acquieſced. The only difficulty that was ſtarted, was amongſt the judges of the realm. They, at firſt, queſtioned whether the proceeding were admiſſible. " The law," ſaid they, " makes proviſion for the transfer " of debts, but not of crimes. Its language " is, *The ſoul that ſinneth ſhall die.*" But when they came to view things on a more enlarged ſcale, conſidering it as an expedient on an extraordinary occaſion, and perceived that the *ſpirit* of the law would be preſerved, and all the ends of good government anſwered, they were ſatisfied. " It is

" not a meaſure," ſaid they, " for which the " law provides: yet it is not contrary to the " law, but above it"

The day appointed arrived. The prince appeared, and ſuffered as a criminal. The hearts of the king's friends bled at every ſtroke, and burned with indignation againſt the conduct which rendered it neceſſary.—His enemies however, even ſome of thoſe for whom he ſuffered, continuing to be diſaffected, added to the affliction, by deriding and inſulting him all the time. At a proper period, he was reſcued from their outrage. Returning to the palace, amidſt the tears and ſhouts of the loyal ſpectators, the ſuffering hero was embraced by his royal Father; who in addition to the natural affection which he bore to him as a ſon, loved him for his ſingular interpoſition at ſuch a criſis. " Sit thou," ſaid he, " at my right hand! Though the " threatenings of the law be not literally ac- " compliſhed, yet the ſpirit of them is pre- " ſerved. The honour of good government " is ſecured, and the end of puniſhment more " effectually anſwered than if all the rebels " had been ſacrificed. Aſk of me what I " ſhall give thee! No favour can be too great " to be beſtowed, even upon the unworthieſt, " nor any crime too aggravated to be forgi- " ven, in thy name. I will grant thee accord- " ing to thine own heart! Aſk of me my " Son, what I ſhall give thee!"

He aſked for the offenders to be introduced as ſupplicants at the feet of his Father,

for the forgiveneſs of their crimes, and for the direction of affairs till order and happineſs ſhould be perfectly reſtored.

A proclamation addreſſed to the conſpirators was now iſſued, ſtating what had been their conduct, what the conduct of the king, and what of the prince. Meſſengers alſo were appointed to carry it, with orders to read it publicly, and to expoſtulate with them individually, beſeeching them to be reconciled to their offended Sovereign, and to aſſure them that if they rejected this, there remained no more hope of mercy.

A ſpectator would ſuppoſe that in mercy ſo freely offered, and ſo honourably communicated, every one would have acquieſced; and if reaſon had governed the offenders, it had been ſo: but many amongſt them continued under the influence of diſaffection, and diſaffection gives a falſe colouring to every thing.

The time of the reſpite having proved longer than was at firſt expected, ſome had begun to amuſe themſelves with idle ſpeculations, flattering themſelves that their fault was a mere trifle, and that it would certainly be paſſed over. Indeed the greater part of them had turned their attention to other things, concluding that the king was not in good earneſt.

When the proclamation was read, many paid no manner of attention to it; ſome inſinuated that the meſſengers were intereſted men, and that there might be no truth in

what they ſaid; and ſome even abuſed them as impoſtors. So, having delivered their meſſage, they withdrew: and the rebels finding themſelves alone, ſuch of them as paid any attention to the ſubject expreſſed their minds as follows:

"My heart," ſays one, "riſes againſt eve-
"ry part of this proceeding —Why all this
"ado about a few words ſpoken one to an-
"other?—Can ſuch a meſſage as this have
"proceeded from the King? What have we
"done ſo much againſt him, that ſo much
"ſhould be made of it? No petition of ours,
"it ſeems, would avail any thing; and no-
"thing that we could ſay or do could be re-
"garded, unleſs preſented in the name of a
"third perſon. Surely if we preſent a peti-
"tion in our own names, in which we beg
"pardon, and promiſe not to repeat the of-
"fence, this might ſuffice. Even this is more
"than I can find in my heart to comply
"with; but every thing beyond it is unrea-
"ſonable; and who can believe that the
"King can deſire it?"

"If a third perſon," ſays another, "muſt
"be concerned in the affair, what occaſion
"is there for one ſo high in rank and digni-
"ty? To ſtand in need of *ſuch* a mediator
"muſt ſtamp our characters with everlaſting
"infamy. It is very unreaſonable: who can
"believe it? If the King be juſt and good,
"as they ſay he is, how can he wiſh thus
"publicly to expoſe us?"

"I obſerve," ſays a third, "that *the mediator is wholly on the King's ſide;* and one "whom, though he affects to pity us, we "have from the outſet, conſidered as no leſs "our enemy than the King himſelf. If, indeed, he could compromiſe matters, and "would allow that we had our provocations, "and would promiſe us redreſs, and an eaſier "yoke in future, I ſhould feel inclined to "hearken: but if he have no conceſſions to "offer, I can never be reconciled."

"I believe," ſays a fourth, "that the king "knows very well that we have not had juſtice done us, and therefore this mediation "buſineſs is introduced to make us amends "for the injury. It is an affair ſettled ſomehow betwixt him and his ſon. They call "it *grace;* and I am not much concerned "what they call it, ſo that my life is ſpared: "but this I ſay, if he had not made this or "ſome kind of proviſion, I ſhould have tho't "him a tyrant,"

"You are all wrong," ſays a fifth: "I "comprehend the deſign, and am well pleased with it. I hate the government as much "as any of you: but I love the mediator; "for I underſtand it is his intention to deliver me from its tyranny. He has paid the "debt, the king is ſatisfied, and I am free.— "I will ſue out my right, and demand my "liberty!"

In addition to this, one of the company obſerved, he did not ſee what the greater part of them had to do with the proclamation,

unleſs it were to give it a hearing, which they had done already. "For," ſaid he, "par-
"don is promiſed only to them who are
"*willing* to ſubmit, and it is well known that
"many of us are unwilling; nor can we al-
"ter our minds on this ſubject."

After a while, however, ſome of them were brought to relent. They thought upon the ſubject matter of the proclamation, were convinced of the juſtneſs of its ſtatements, reflected upon their evil conduct, and were ſincerely ſorry on account of it. And now the mediation of the prince appeared in a very different light. They cordially ſaid *Amen* to every part of the proceeding. The very things which gave ſuch offence while their hearts were diſaffected, now appeared to them fit, and right, and glorious. It is
"fit," ſay they, "that the king ſhould be
"honoured, and that we ſhould be humbled;
"for we have *tranſgreſſed without cauſe*. It
"is right that no regard ſhould be paid to
"any petition of ours for its own ſake; for
"we have done deeds worthy of death. It
"is glorious that we ſhould be ſaved at the
"interceſſion of ſo honourable a perſonage.
"The dignity of his character, together with
"his ſurpriſing condeſcenſion and goodneſs,
"impreſſes us more than any thing elſe, and
"fills our hearts with penitence, confidence,
"and love. That which in the proclamation
"is called grace, *is* grace; for we are utter-
"ly unworthy of it; and if we had all ſuffer-
"ed according to our ſentence, the king and

" his throne had been guiltleſs. We embrace
" the mediation of the prince, not as a repa-
" ration for an injury, but as a ſingular in-
" ſtance of mercy. And far be it from us
" that we ſhould conſider it as deſigned to
" deliver us from our original and juſt alle-
" giance to his majeſty's government! No,
" rather it is intended to reſtore us to it.—
" We love our interceſſor, and will implore
" forgiveneſs in his name; but we alſo love
" our ſovereign, and long to proſtrate our-
" ſelves at his feet. We rejoice in the ſatis-
" faction which the prince has made, and all
" our hopes of mercy are founded upon it:
" but we have no notion of being freed by it
" previouſly to our acquieſcence in it. Nor
" do we deſire any other kind of freedom
" than that which while it remits the juſt
" ſentence of the law, reſtores us to his ma-
" jeſty's government. O that we were once
" clear of this hateful and horrid conſpiracy,
" and might be permitted to ſerve him with
" affection and fidelity all the days of our life!
" We cannot ſuſpect the *ſincerity* of the in-
" vitation, or acquit our companions on the
" ſcore of *unwillingneſs*. Why ſhould we?
" We do not on this account acquit our-
" ſelves. On the contrary, it is the remem-
" brance of our unwillingneſs that now cuts
" us to the heart. We well remember to
" what it was owing that we *could not* be ſat-
" isfied with the juſt government of the king,
" and afterwards *could not* comply with the
" invitations of mercy: it was becauſe we

" were under the dominion of a *diſaffected*
" *ſpirit;* a ſpirit which wicked as it is in it-
" ſelf, it would be more wicked to juſtify.—
" Our counſel is, therefore, the ſame as that
" of his majeſty's meſſengers, with whom we
" now take our ſtand. Let us lay aſide this
" cavilling humour, repent, and ſue for mer-
" cy in the way preſcribed, ere mercy be hid
" from our eyes!"

The reader, in applying this ſuppoſed caſe to the Mediation of Chriſt, will do me the juſtice to remember that I do not pretend to have perfectly repreſented it. Probably there is no ſimilitude fully adequate to the purpoſe. The diſtinction between the Father and the Son is not the ſame as that which ſubſiſts between a father and a ſon amongſt men: the latter are two ſeparate beings; but to aſſert this of the former would be inconſiſtent with the divine unity. And with reſpect to the innocent voluntarily ſuffering for the guilty, in a few extraordinary inſtances this principle may be adopted; but the management and application of it, generally require more wiſdom and more power than mortals poſſeſs. We may by the help of a machine collect a few ſparks of the electrical fluid, and produce an effect ſomewhat reſembling that of lightning: but we cannot cauſe it to blaze like the Almighty, nor *thunder with a voice like Him.*

Imperfect, however, as the foregoing ſimilitude may appear in ſome reſpects, it is ſufficient to ſhew the fallacy of Mr. Paine's rea-

foning. "The doctrine of Redemption,"—ſays the writer, "has for its baſis an idea of "pecuniary juſtice, and not that of moral "juſtice. If I owe a perſon money, and can- "not pay him, and he threatens to put me "in priſon, another perſon can take the "debt upon himſelf, and pay it for me. But "if I have committed a *crime*, every circum- "ſtance of the caſe is changed. Moral juſ- "tice cannot take the innocent for the guil- "ty, even if the innocent would offer itſelf. "To ſuppoſe juſtice to do this, is to deſtroy "the principle of its exiſtence, which is the "thing itſelf. It is then no longer juſtice: but "is indiſcriminate revenge."* This objection, which is the ſame for ſubſtance as has been frequently urged by Socinians as well as deiſts, is founded in miſrepreſentation. It is not true that Redemption has for its baſis the idea of pecuniary juſtice, and not that of moral juſtice. That ſin is called a *debt*, and the death of Chriſt a *price*, a *ranſom*, *&c.* is true; but it is no unuſual thing for moral obligations and deliverances to be expreſſed in language borrowed from pecuniary tranſactions. The obligations of a ſon to a father are commonly expreſſed by ſuch terms as owing and paying: he *owes* a debt of obedience, and in yielding it, he *pays* a debt of gratitude. The ſame may be ſaid of an obligation to puniſhment. A murderer *owes* his life to the juſtice of his country; and

* *Age of Reaſon*, Part I. p. 20.

when he suffers, he is said to pay the awful debt. So also if a great character by suffering death could deliver his country, such deliverance would be spoken of as obtained by the *price* of blood No one mistakes these things by understanding them of pecuniary transactions. In such connexions, every one perceives that the terms are used not literally but metaphorically; and it is thus that they are to be understood with reference to the death of Christ. As sin is not a pecuniary, but a moral debt; so the atonement for it is not a pecuniary, but a moral ransom.

There is doubtless a sufficient analogy between pecuniary and moral proceedings to justify the use of such language, both in scripture and in common life; and it is easy to perceive the advantages which arise from it; as besides conveying much important truth, it renders it peculiarly impressive to the mind. But it is not always safe to reason from the former to the latter; much less is it just to affirm that the latter has for its basis every principle which pertains to the former. The deliverance effected by the prince in the case before stated might, with propriety be called a *redemption;* and the recollection of it under this idea would be very impressive to the minds of those who were delivered. They would scarcely be able to see or think of their Commander in Chief, even though it might be years after the event, without being reminded of the *price* at

which their pardon was obtained, and dropping a tear of ingenuous grief over their unworthy conduct on this account. Yet it would not be juſt to ſay that this redemption had for its baſis an idea of pecuniary juſtice, and not that of moral juſtice. It was moral juſtice which in this caſe was ſatisfied; not however in its ordinary form, but as exerciſed on an extraordinary occaſion; not the letter, but the ſpirit of it.

The ſcripture doctrine of atonement being conveyed in language borrowed from pecuniary tranſactions, is not only improved by unbelievers into an argument againſt the truth of the goſpel, but has been the occaſion of many errors amongſt the profeſſors of Chriſtianity. Socinus on this ground attempts to explain away the neceſſity of a ſatisfaction. "God," ſays he, "is our *Creator*. Our ſins are *debts* which we have contracted with him; but every one may "yield up his right, and more eſpecially "God, who is the ſupreme Lord of all, and "extolled in the ſcriptures for his liberality "and goodneſs. Hence then it is evident "that God can pardon ſins without any ſatisfaction received."* *Others*, who profeſs to embrace the doctrine of ſatisfaction, have on the ſame ground perverted and abuſed it; objecting to the propriety of humble and continued applications for mercy, and preſuming to claim the forgiveneſs of their

* Treatiſe *of Jeſus Chriſt the Saviour*, Pt. III. Ch. I.

sins, past, present and to come, as their legal right, and what it woud be unjust in the Supreme Being, having received complete satisfaction, to withhold.

To the reasoning of Socinus, Dr. Owen judiciously replies by distinguishing between right as it respects *debts*, and as it respects *government*. The former he allows may be given up without a satisfaction, but not the latter. "Our sins," he adds, "are called debts, not properly, but metaphorically."* This answer equally applies to those who pervert the doctrine, as to those who deny it: for though in matters of debt and credit a full satisfaction from a surety excludes the idea of *free* pardon on the part of the creditor, and admits of a *claim* on the part of the debtor, yet it is otherwise in relation to crimes. In the interposition of the prince, as stated above, an honorable expedient was adopted, by means of which, the sovereign was satisfied, and the exercise of mercy rendered consistent with just authority: but there was no less grace in the act of forgiveness, than if it had been without a satisfaction. However well pleased the king might be with the conduct of his son, the freeness of pardon was not at all diminished by it; nor must the criminals come before him as claimants, but as supplicants, imploring mercy in the mediator's name.

Such are the leading ideas which the scriptures give us of Redemption by Jesus Christ.

* *Dissertation on Divine Justice*, Ch. IX. § vii, viii.

—The Apoſtle Paul eſpecially teaches this doctrine with great preciſion: *Being juſtified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Jeſus Chriſt: Whom God hath ſet forth to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood, to declare his righteouſneſs for the remiſſion of ſins that are paſt, through the forbearance of God; to declare*, I ſay, *at this time his righteouſneſs, that he might be juſt, and the juſtifier of him that believeth in Jeſus.**—From this paſſage we may remark, Firſt, That the *grace* of God, as taught in the ſcriptures, is not that kind of liberality which Socinians and deiſts aſcribe to him, which ſets aſide the neceſſity of a ſatisfaction. —Free grace, according to Paul, requires a *propitiation*, even the ſhedding of the Saviour's *blood*, as a medium through which it may be honorably communicated. Secondly, Redemption by Jeſus Chriſt was accompliſhed, not by a ſatisfaction that ſhould preclude the exerciſe of grace in forgiveneſs, but in which the diſpleaſure of God againſt ſin being manifeſted mercy to the ſinner might be exerciſed without any ſuſpicion of his having relinquiſhed his regards for righteouſneſs. In *ſetting forth Jeſus Chriſt to be a propitiation*, he *declared his righteouſneſs for the remiſſion of ſins*. Thirdly, The righteouſneſs of God was not only declared when Chriſt was made a propitiatory ſacrifice; but continues to be manifeſted in the acceptance of believers through his name.

* Rom. iii. 24—26.

He appears as *Just* while acting the part of a *justifier* towards every one that *believeth in Jesus*. Fourthly, That which is here applied to the blessings of forgiveness and acceptance with God, is applicable to all other spiritual blessings: all, according to the scriptures, are freely communicated through the same distinguished medium. See Ephes. i.*

* The Christian reader, it is presumed, may, from hence, obtain a clear view of the ends answered by the death of Christ, a subject which has occupied much attention amongst divines. Some have asserted that Christ, by his satisfaction, accomplished this only, "that God now, consistently with the honor of his justice, may pardon (returning) sinners if he willeth so to do." This is doubtless true as far as it goes: but it makes no provision for the return of the sinner. This scheme, therefore, leaves the sinner to perish in impenitence and unbelief, and the Saviour without any security of seeing of the travail of his soul. For how can a sinner return without the power of the Holy Spirit? And the Holy Spirit, equally with every other spiritual blessing, is given in consideration of the death of Christ.—Others, to remedy this defect, have considered the death of Christ as *purchasing* repentance and faith, as well as all other spiritual blessings, on behalf of the elect; and upon this ground have maintained that "God is bound, in strict justice, in respect to Jesus Christ, to confer grace and glory on all those for whom he died."* The writer of these pages acknowledges he never could perceive that any clear or determinate idea was conveyed by the term purchase in this connexion, nor does it appear to him to be a doctrine taught in the scriptures. The notion of grace being bestowed *on account of value received*, appears to him inconsistent with the freeness of grace itself, and with the perfection of the divine Being, to whom nothing can be added or given which can lay him under obligation. If the salvation of sinners have been a commercial transaction, he might possibly have been bound, in strict right, with respect to Christ, to bestow grace and glory; but in that case there would have been no room for free remission, with respect to the Father. If sin be what Dr. Owen very justly contends it is, not a *debt*, but a *crime*; and if the satisfaction of Christ was not a reimbursement of

* *See Dr. Owen's Dissertation on Divine Justice, Chap. XII. Sec. v. vi. vii.*

Theſe remarks may ſuffice to ſhew, not only that Mr. Paine's aſſertion has no truth in it, but that all thoſe profeſſors of Chriſtianity who have adopted his principle, have ſo far deviated from the doctrine of Redemption as it is taught in the Scriptures.

loſt property, but an expedient deviſed for the preſerving of the divine character in the exerciſe of mercy, no ſuch conſequence will follow. God will be under no other obligation to ſave any ſinner than that which ſpontaneouſly ariſes from his own nature, and the promiſe made to his Son.

If we ſay, A WAY WAS OPENED BY THE DEATH OF CHRIST FOR THE FREE AND CONSISTENT EXERCISE OF MERCY, IN ALL THE METHODS WHICH SOVEREIGN WISDOM SAW FIT TO ADOPT, perhaps we ſhall include every material idea which the Scriptures gives us of that important event.

There are *three* kinds of bleſſings in particular, which God, out of regard to the death of his Son, beſtows upon men.—Firſt, He ſends forth the goſpel of ſalvation, accompanied with a free and indefinite invitation to embrace it, and an aſſurance that whoſoever complies with the invitation, (for which there is no ability wanting in any man who poſſeſſes an honeſt heart) ſhall have everlaſting life. This favor is beſtowed ON SINNERS AS SINNERS. God *giveth the true bread from heaven* in this way to many who never receive it. He inviteth thoſe to the goſpel ſupper who refuſe and *make light of it*. John vi. 32, 36. Matt. xxii. 4, 5.

Secondly, He beſtows his Holy Spirit to renew and ſanctify the ſoul: gives a new heart, and a right ſpirit, and takes away the heart of ſtone.—*Chriſt is exalted to give repentance.* Acts v. 31. *Unto us it is given in behalf of Chriſt, to believe in him.* Phil. i. 29. *We have obtained like precious faith thro' the righteouſneſs of God, and our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt.* 2 Pet. i. 1. This favor is conferred on ELECT SINNERS. See Acts xiii. 48. Rom. viii. 28—30.

Thirdly, Through the ſame medium is given the free pardon of all our ſins, acceptance with God, power to become the ſons of God, and the promiſe of everlaſting life. *Your ſins are forgiven you, for his name's ſake.* 1 John ii. 12. *God, for Chriſt's ſake, hath forgiven you.* Epheſ. iv. 32. *We are accepted in the beloved.* Ehpeſ. i. 6. *By means of his death we receive the promiſe of eternal inheritance.* Heb. ix. 15. This kind of bleſſings is conferred on BELIEVING SINNERS.

As to what Mr. Paine alledges, that the innocent ſuffering for the guilty, even tho' it be with his own conſent, is contrary to every principle of moral juſtice, he affirms the ſame of God's *viſiting the iniquities of the fathers upon the children.** But this is a truth evident by univerſal experience. It is ſeen every day, in every part of the world. If Mr. Paine indulge in intemperance, and leave children behind him, they may feel the conſequences of his miſconduct when he is in his grave. The ſins of the father may thus be viſited upon the children to the third and fourth generation. It would, however, be their *affliction* only, and not their puniſhment. Yet ſuch viſitations are wiſely ordered as a motive to ſobriety. Nor is it between parents and children only that ſuch a connexion exiſts, as that the happineſs of one depends upon the conduct of others: a ſlight ſurvey of ſociety, in its various relations, muſt convince us that the ſame principle pervades creation. To call this injuſtice, is to fly in the face of the Creator. With ſuch an objector I have nothing to do; *He that reproveth God, let him anſwer it.*

If the idea of the innocent ſuffering in the room of the guilty were, in all caſes, inadmiſſible, and utterly repugnant to the human underſtanding, how came the uſe of *expiatory ſacrifices* to prevail as it has, in every age and nation? Whether the idea firſt pro-

* *Age of Reaſon*, Part I. p. 4. Note.

ceeded from a divine command, as Chriſtians generally believe, or whatever was its origin, it has approved itſelf to the minds of men; and not of the moſt uncultivated part of mankind only, but of the moſt learned and polite. The ſacrifices of the Gentiles, it is true, were full of ſuperſtition, and widely different, as might be expected, from thoſe which were regulated by the Scriptures; but the general principle is the ſame: All agree in the idea of the diſpleaſure of the Deity being appeaſable by an innocent victim being ſacrificed in the place of the guilty. The idea of expiatory ſacrifices, and of a mediation founded upon them, is beautifully expreſſed in the book of Job; a book not only of great antiquity, but which ſeems to have obtained the approbation of Mr. Paine, having, as he ſuppoſes, been written by a Gentile.—*And it was ſo, that, after the Lord had ſpoken theſe words unto Job, the Lord ſaid to Eliphaz the Temanite, My wrath is kindled againſt thee, and againſt thy two friends: for ye have not ſpoken of me the thing that is right, as my ſervant Job hath. —Therefore take unto you now ſeven bullocks and ſeven rams, and go to my ſervant Job, and offer up for yourſelves a burnt-offering, and my ſervant Job ſhall pray for you; for him will I accept: leſt I deal with you after your folly, in that ye have not ſpoken of me the thing which is right, like my ſervant Job. So Eliphaz the Temanite, and Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite, went, and*

*did according as the Lord commanded them: the Lord also accepted Job.** The objections which are now made to the sacrifice of Christ, equally apply to all expiatory sacrifices; the offering up of which, had not the former superceded them, would have continued to this day.

If an innocent character offer to die in the room of a guilty fellow-creature, it is not ordinarily accepted, nor would it be proper that it should. For he may have no just right to dispose of his life; or if he have, he has no power to resume it: there may likewise be no such relation between the parties, as that the suffering of the one should express displeasure against the conduct of the other. Besides this, there may be no great and good end accomplished by such a substitution, to society; the loss sustained by the death of the one might be equal, if not superior, to the gain from the life of the other. If the evil to be endured might be survived; if the relation between the parties were such that in the sufferings of the one, mankind would be impressed with the evil of the other; and if by such a proceeding great advantage would accrue to society, instead of being accounted inadmissible, it would be reckoned right, and wise, and good.—If a dignified individual, by enduring some temporary severity from an offended nation, could appease their displeasure, and thereby

* Chap. xlii. 7—9.

ſave his country from the deſtroying ſword, who would not admire his diſintereſted conduct? And if the offended, from motives of humanity, were contented with expreſſing their diſpleaſure, by transferring the effect of it from a whole nation to an individual, who thus ſtepped forward on their behalf, would their conduct be cenſured as "indiſcriminate revenge?" The truth is, the atonement of Chriſt affords a diſplay of juſtice on too large a ſcale, and on too humbling a principle, to approve itſelf to a contracted, ſelfiſh, and haughty mind.

CHAP. V.

The Conſiſtency of the Scripture Doctrine of Redemption, with the modern Opinion of the Magnitude of Creation.

IT is common for Deiſts to impute the progreſs of their principles to *the prevalence of true philoſophy*.—The world, they ſay, is more enlightened; and a great number of diſcoveries are progreſſively making, which render the credibility of the ſcriptures more and more ſuſpicious. It is now a commonly received opinion, for inſtance, among men of ſcience, that this world is but a point in creation; that every planet is a world, and all the fixed ſtars ſo many ſuns in the centres of ſo many ſyſtems of worlds; and that as every part of creation within our knowledge teems with life, and as God hath made nothing in vain, it is highly probable that all theſe worlds are inhabited by intelligent beings, who are capable of knowing and adoring their Creator. But if this be true, how incredible is it that ſo great a portion of regard ſhould be exerciſed by the Supreme Being towards man as the ſcriptures repreſent; how incredible, eſpecially, it muſt appear to a thinking mind, that Deity ſhould become incarnate, ſhould take human nature into the moſt intimate union with himſelf, and thereby raiſe it to ſuch ſingular e-

minency in the ſcale of being, though compared with the whole of creation, if we comprehend even the whole ſpecies, it will be leſs than a neſt of inſects compared with the unnumbered millions of animated beings which inhabit the earth.

This objection, there is reaſon to think, has had a very conſiderable influence on the ſpeculating part of mankind. Mr. Paine, in the Firſt Part of his *Age of Reaſon*,* has labored, after his manner, to make the moſt of it, and thereby to diſparage Chriſtianity. —"Though it is not a direct article of the "Chriſtian ſyſtem," he ſays, "that this world, "which we inhabit, is the whole of the ha-"bitable creation; yet it is ſo worked up "therewith, from what is called the Moſaic "account of the creation, the ſtory of Eve "and the apple, and the counterpart of that "ſtory, the death of the Son of God, that to "believe otherwiſe, that is, to believe that "God created a plurality of worlds, at leaſt "as numerous as what we call ſtars, renders "the Chriſtian ſyſtem of faith, at once little "and ridiculous, and ſcatters it in the mind "like feathers in the air. The two beliefs "cannot be held together in the ſame mind; "and he who thinks he believes both, has "thought but little of either."†

Again, Having diſcourſed on the vaſt extent of creation, he aſks, "But in the midſt "of theſe reflections, what are we to think

* p. 40——47. † p. 40.

" of the Chriſtian ſyſtem of faith, that forms
" itſelf upon the idea of only one world, and
" that of no greater extent than twenty-five
" thouſand miles?"—From whence could a-
" riſe the ſolitary and ſtrange conceit that
" the Almighty, who had millions of worlds
" equally dependent on his protection, ſhould
" quit the care of all the reſt, and come to
" die in our world, becauſe they ſay one man,
" and one woman had eaten an apple? And
" on the other hand, are we to ſuppoſe that
" every world in the boundleſs creation had
" an Eve, an apple, a ſerpent, and a Redeem-
" er? In this caſe, the perſon who is irreve-
" rently called the Son of God, and ſome-
" times God himſelf, would have nothing
" elſe to do than to travel from world to
" world, in an endleſs ſucceſſion of death,
" with ſcarce a momentary interval of life."*

To animadvert upon all the extravagant and offenſive things, even in ſo ſmall a part of Mr. Paine's performance as the above quotation, would be an irkſome taſk. A few remarks, however, may not be improper.

Firſt, Though Mr. Paine is pleaſed to ſay, in his uſual ſtyle of naked aſſertion, that "the
" two beliefs cannot be held together; and
" that he who thinks he believes both, has
" thought but little of either;" yet he cannot be ignorant, that many who have admitted the one, have, at the ſame time, held faſt the other. Mr. Paine is certainly not overload-

* p. 46.

ed with modeſty, when comparing his own abilities and acquiſitions with thoſe of other men: but I am inclined to think, that, with all his aſſurance, he will not pretend that BACON, or BOYLE, or NEWTON, to mention no more, had thought but little of philoſophy or Chriſtianity. I imagine it would be within the compaſs of truth, were I to ſay, they beſtowed twenty times more thought upon both theſe ſubjects than ever Mr. Paine did. His extreme ignorance of Chriſtianity, at leaſt, is manifeſt, by the numerous groſs blunders of which he has been detected.

Secondly, Suppoſing the ſcripture account of the Creation to be inconſiſtent with the ideas which modern philoſophers entertain of its extent; yet it is not what Mr. Paine repreſents it.—It certainly does not teach, "that this world, which we inhabit, is the "whole of the habitable creation."—Mr. Paine will not deny, that it exhibits a world of happineſs, and a world of miſery, though in the career of his extravagance, he ſeems to have overlooked it.

Thirdly, If the two beliefs, as Mr. Paine calls them, cannot be conſiſtently held together, we need not be at a loſs to determine which to relinquiſh. All the reaſoning in favor of a multiplicity of worlds, inhabited by intelligent beings, amounts to no more than *a ſtrong probability*. No man can properly be ſaid to believe it: it is not a matter of faith, but of opinion. It is an opinion too that has taken place of other opinions, which,

in their day, were admired by the philoſophical part of mankind as much as this is in ours.—Mr. Paine ſeems to wiſh to have it thought, that the doctrine of a multiplicity of inhabited worlds is a matter of *demonſtration*: but the exiſtence of a number of heavenly bodies, whoſe revolutions are under the direction of certain laws, and whoſe returns, therefore, are the objects of human calculation, does not prove that they are all inhabited by intelligent beings. I do not deny that, from other conſiderations, the thing may be highly probable; but it is no more than a probability. Now, before we give up a doctrine, which, if it were even to prove fallacious, has no dangerous conſequences attending it; and which, if it ſhould be found a truth, involves our eternal ſalvation, we ſhould endeavor to have a more ſolid ground than mere opinion on which to take our ſtand.

But I do not wiſh to avail myſelf of theſe obſervations, as I am under no apprehenſions that the cauſe in which I engage requires them.—ADMITTING THAT THE INTELLIGENT CREATION IS AS EXTENSIVE AS MODERN PHILOSOPHY SUPPOSES, THE CREDIBILITY OF REDEMPTION IS NOT THEREBY WEAKENED; BUT, ON THE CONTRARY, IN MANY RESPECTS, IS STRENGTHENED AND AGGRANDIZED. I ſhall offer a few obſervations on each of the branches of the above poſition.

The ſcripture doctrine of Redemption, it is acknowledged, ſuppoſes that man, mean and little as he is in the ſcale of being, has occupied a peculiar portion of the divine regard. It requires to be noticed, however, that the enemies of revelation, in order, it ſhould ſeem, to give the greater force to their objection, diminiſh the importance of man, as a creature of God, beyond what its friends can admit.—Though Mr. Paine expreſſeth his "hope of happineſs beyond this life;" and though ſome other deiſtical writers have admitted the immortality of the ſoul; yet this is more than others of them will allow. The hope of a future ſtate, as we have ſeen, is objected to by many of them as a *ſelfiſh* principle; and others of them have attempted to hold it up to ridicule. But the immortality of man is a doctrine which Redemption ſuppoſes; and if this be allowed, man is not ſo inſignificant a being as they might wiſh to conſider him.—A being that poſſeſſes an immortal mind, a mind capable of increaſing knowledge, and conſequently of increaſing happineſs, or miſery, in an endleſs duration, cannot be inſignificant. It is no exaggeration to ſay that the ſalvation of one ſoul, according to the ſcriptural account of things, is of inconceivably greater moment than the temporal ſalvation of a nation, or of all the nations in the world, for ten thouſand ages. The eternal ſalvation, therefore, of a number of loſt ſinners, which no man can number, however it may be a matter of

infinite condeſcenſion in the great Supreme to accompliſh, is not an object for creatures, even the moſt exalted, to conſider as of ſmall account.

Having premiſed thus much, I ſhall proceed, in the firſt place, to offer a few obſervations in proof that THERE IS NOTHING IN THE SCRIPTURE DOCTRINE OF REDEMPTION WHICH IS INCONSISTENT WITH THE MODERN OPINION OF THE MAGNITUDE OF CREATION.

I. *Let creation be as extenſive as it may, and the number of worlds be multiplied to the utmoſt boundary to which imagination can reach, there is no proof that any of them, except men and angels, have apoſtatized from God.*—

If our world be only a ſmall province, ſo to ſpeak, of God's vaſt empire, there is reaſon to hope, that it is the only part of it where ſin has entered, except among the fallen angels; and that the endleſs myriads of intelligent beings, in other worlds, are all the hearty friends of virtue, of order, and of God.

If this be true, (and there is nothing in philoſophy or divinity, I believe, to diſcredit it,) then Mr. Paine need not have ſuppoſed, if he could have ſuppreſſed the pleaſure of the witticiſm, that the Son of God ſhould have to travel from world to world in the character of a Redeemer.

II. *Let creation be ever ſo extenſive, there is nothing inconſiſtent with reaſon in ſuppoſ-*

ing that some one particular part of it should be chosen out of the rest, as a theatre on which the great Author of all things would perform his most glorious works.—

Every empire that has been founded in this world has had some one particular spot where those actions were performed, from whence its glory has arisen. The glory of the Cæsars was founded on the event of a battle fought near a very inconsiderable city: and why might not this world, though less than "twenty-five thousand miles in circumference," be chosen as the theatre on which God would bring about events that should fill his whole empire with glory and joy? It would be as reasonable to plead the insignificance of *Actium* or *Agincourt* as an objection to the competency of the victories there obtained, (supposing them to have been on the side of righteousness) to fill the respective empires of Rome and Britain with glory, as that of our world to fill the whole empire of God with matter of joy and everlasting praise. The truth is, the comparative dimension of our world is of no account. If it be large enough for the accomplishment of events which are sufficient to occupy the minds of all intelligences, that is all that is required.

III. *If any one part of God's creation, rather than another, possessed a superior fitness to become a theatre on which he might display his glory, it should seem to be that part where the greatest efforts have been made to dishonor him.*—

A rebellious province in an empire, would be the fitteſt place in it to diſplay the juſtice, goodneſs, and benignity of a government.—Here would naturally be erected the banner of righteouſneſs; here the war would be carried on; here pardons and puniſhments to different characters would be awarded; and here the honors of the government would be eſtabliſhed on ſuch a baſis, that the remoteſt parts of the empire might hear, and fear, and learn obedience. The part that is diſeaſed, whether in the body natural, or the body politic, is the part to which the remedy is directed. Let there be what number of worlds there may, full of intelligent creatures; yet if there be but one world which is guilty and miſerable, thither will be directed the operations of mercy. The good ſhepherd of the ſheep will leave the ninety and nine in the wilderneſs, and ſeek and ſave that which is loſt.

IV. *The events bro't to paſs in this world, little and inſignificant as it may be, are competent to fill all, and every part of God's dominions with everlaſting and increaſing joy.*—

Mental enjoyment differs widely from corporeal: the beſtowment of the one upon a great number of objects is neceſſarily attended with a diviſion of it into parts; and thoſe who come in for a ſhare of it diminiſh the quantity remaining for others that come after them; but not ſo the other. An intellectual object requires only to be known, and it is equally capable of affording enjoyment

to a million as to an individual, to a world as to a million, and to the whole univerſe, be it ever ſo extenſive, as to a world. If, as the ſcriptures inform us, *God was manifeſt in the fleſh, juſtified in the ſpirit, ſeen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, and received up into glory*; if there be enough in this *myſterious* tranſaction to fill with joy the hearts of all who believe it; if it be ſo intereſting that the moſt exalted intelligences become comparatively indifferent to every other object, *deſiring to look into it*; then is it ſufficient to *fill all things*, and to exhibit the divine glory *in all places of his dominion.**

Mr. Paine allows that it is not a direct article of the Chriſtian ſyſtem that there is not a plurality of inhabited worlds; yet he affirms it is ſo *worked up* with the ſcripture account, that to believe the latter we muſt relinquiſh the former, as little and ridiculous.

The ſcriptures, it is true, do not teach the dōctrine of a multitude of inhabited worlds: but neither do they teach the contrary.—Neither the one nor the other forms any part of their deſign. The object they keep in view, though Mr. Paine may term it "little and ridiculous," is infinitely ſuperior to this, both as to utility and magnitude. They were not given to teach us aſtronomy, or geography, or civil government, or any ſcience which relates to the preſent life only;

* 1 Pet. i. 12. Epheſ. iv. 10. Pſal. ciii. 22.

therefore they do not determine upon any ſyſtem of any of theſe ſciences. Theſe are things upon which reaſon is competent to judge, ſufficient, at leaſt, for all the purpoſes of human life, without a revelation from heaven. The great object of Revelation is, to inſtruct us in things which pertain to our everlaſting peace; and as to other things, even the riſe and fall of the mightieſt empires, they are only touched in an incidental manner, as the mention of them might be neceſſary to higher purpoſes. The great empires of Babylon, Perſia, Greece, and Rome are predicted and deſcribed in the ſcriptures, by the riſing and ravaging of ſo many *beaſts* of prey. Speaking of the European part of the earth, which was inhabited by the poſterity of Japhet, they do not go about to give an exact, geographical deſcription of it; but, by a ſynecdoche, call it *the iſles of the Gentiles*;* and this, as I ſuppoſe, becauſe its eaſtern boundary, the Archipelago, or Grecian *Iſlands*, were ſituated contiguous to the Holy Land. And thus, when ſpeaking of the whole creation, they call it *the heavens and the earth*, as being the whole that comes within the reach of our ſenſes.

It is no diſhonor to the ſcriptures that they keep to their profeſſed end. Tho' they give us no ſyſtem of aſtronomy; yet they urge us to ſtudy the works of God, and teach us to adore him upon every diſcovery. Tho'

* Gen. x. 5. Iſai. xlix. 1.

they give us no ſyſtem of geography; yet they encourage us to avail ourſelves of obſervation and experience to obtain one, ſeeing the whole earth is given in prophecy to the Meſſiah, and is marked out as the field in which his ſervants are to labor. Though they determine not upon any mode or ſyſtem of civil government; yet they teach obedience, in civil matters, to all. And tho' their attention be mainly directed to things which pertain to the life to come; yet by attending to their inſtructions, we are alſo fitted for the labors and ſufferings of the preſent life.

The ſcriptures are written in a *popular* ſtyle, as beſt adapted to their great end. If the ſalvation of philoſophers only had been their object, the language might poſſibly have been ſomewhat different; though even this may be a matter of doubt, ſince the ſtyle is ſuited to the ſubject, and to the great end which they had in view: But being addreſſed to men of every degree, it was highly proper that the language ſhould be fitted to every capacity, and ſuited to their common modes of conception. They ſpeak of *the foundations of the earth, the ends of the earth, the greater and leſſer lights* in the heavens, the ſun *riſing, ſtanding ſtill,* and *going down,* and many other things in the ſame way. If deiſts object to theſe modes of ſpeaking as conveying ideas which are inconſiſtent with the true theory of the heavens and the earth, let them, if they can, ſubſtitute others which

are conſiſtent: let them, in their common converſation, when deſcribing the revolutions of evening and morning, ſpeak of the earth as riſing and going down inſtead of the Sun, and the ſame with regard to the revolutions of the planets, and ſee if men in common will better underſtand them, or whether they would be able even to underſtand one another. The conſtant uſe of ſuch language, even by philoſophers themſelves, in common converſation, ſufficiently proves the futility and unfairneſs of their objecting to Revelation on this account. The popular ideas on theſe ſubjects are as much "worked up" in the common converſation of philoſophers, as they are in the ſcriptures.

By the drift of Mr. Paine's writings, he ſeems to wiſh to convey the idea, that ſo contracted were the views of the ſcriptural writers, that even the *globularity* of the earth was unknown to them. If, however, ſuch a ſentence as that of Job, *He hangeth the earth upon nothing*,* had been found in any of the old heathen writers, he would readily have concluded that "this idea was familiar to the ancients." Or if a heathen poet had uttered ſuch language as that of Iſaiah—*Behold the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the ſmall duſt of the balance: behold, he taketh up the iſles as a very little thing. All nations before* HIM *are as nothing; and they are counted to* HIM *leſs than nothing*

* Chap. xxvi. 7.

and vanity, he might have been applauded as poſſeſſing a mind as large, and nearly as well informed as the geniuſes of modern times But the truth is, the ſcriptural writers were not intent on diſplaying the greatneſs of their own conception, nor even of creation itſelf; but rather of the glory of HIM *who filleth all in all.*

The foregoing obſervations may ſuffice to remove Mr. Paine's objection; but if, in addition to them, it can be proved, that upon the ſuppoſition of a great number of inhabited worlds, Chriſtianity, inſtead of appearing "little and ridiculous," is the more enlarged, and that ſome of its difficulties are the more eaſily accounted for, this will be ſtill more ſatisfactory. Let us, therefore, proceed, Secondly, to offer evidence that THE CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE OF REDEMPTION IS STRENGTHENED AND AGGRANDIZED BY THE SUPPOSED MAGNITUDE OF CREATION.

I. *The ſcripture teaches, that God's regard to man is an aſtoniſhing inſtance of condeſcenſion, and that on account of the diſparity between him and the celeſtial creation.*—

When I conſider thy heavens, ſaith David, *the work of thy fingers, the moon and the ſtars which thou haſt ordained; what is man, that thou art mindful of him; and the ſon of man, that thou viſiteſt him? Will God in very deed,* ſaith Solomon, *dwell with men upon the earth?**

* Pſ. viii. 3, 4. 2 Chr. vi. 18. In this part of the ſubject conſiderable uſe is made of the ſcriptures; but it is only for

The divine condeſcenſion towards man is a truth upon any ſyſtem; but upon the ſuppoſition of the heavenly bodies being ſo many inhabited worlds, it is a truth full of amazement, and the foregoing language of David and Solomon is forcible beyond all conception. The idea of HIM, who *upholds* a Univerſe of ſuch extent *by the word of his power*, becoming incarnate, reſiding with men, and ſetting up his kingdom amongſt them, that he might raiſe them to eternal glory, as much ſurpaſſeth all that philoſophy calls great and noble, as the Creator ſurpaſſes the work of his hands.

II. *The ſcriptures inform us that before creation was begun, our world was marked out by eternal wiſdom as the theatre of its joyful operations.*—

This idea is forcibly expreſſed in the eighth chapter of Proverbs: *Before the mountains were ſettled; before the hills, was I bro't forth—while as yet he had not made the earth, nor the fields, nor the higheſt part of the duſt of the world. When he prepared the heavens, I was there; when he ſet a compaſs upon the face of the depth: when he eſtabliſhed the clouds above; when he ſtrengthened the fountains of the deep: when he gave to the Sea his decree, that the waters ſhould not paſs his commandment: when he appointed the foundations of*

the purpoſe of aſcertaining *what the Chriſtian doctrine of redemption is:* and this is undoubtedly conſiſtent with every rule of juſt reaſoning, as, whether they be true or falſe, they are the ſtandard by which this doctrine is to be meaſured.

the earth: then I was by him, as one brought up with him: and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him; rejoicing in the habitable part of his earth; and my delights were with the ſons of men.

On this intereſting paſſage I ſhall offer a few remarks. Firſt, Amongſt the variety of objects which are here ſpecified as the works of God, *the earth* is mentioned as being in a ſort his peculiar property. Doubtleſs the whole creation is the Lord's; but none of his other works are here claimed as his own, in the manner that the earth is. It is called *his* earth. And this ſeems to intimate a deſign of rendering it the grand theatre on which his greateſt work ſhould be performed; a work that ſhould fill all creation with joy and wonder. Secondly, The wiſdom of God is deſcribed as *rejoicing* in the contemplation of this part of the creation. Whether *wiſdom*, in this paſſage, be underſtood of the promiſed Meſſiah, or of a divine attribute perſonified, it makes no difference as to the argument. Allow it to mean the latter; and that the rejoicing of wiſdom is a figurative mode of ſpeaking, like that of *mercy rejoicing againſt judgment*;* ſtill Redemption by Jeſus Chriſt is the object concerning which it was exerciſed. Nothing leſs can be intimated than this, that the earth was the place marked out by eternal Wiſdom as the theatre of its joyful operations. Thirdly, The

* James ii. 13.

habitable part of the earth was more eſpecially the object of Wiſdom's joyful contemplation. The abodes of men, which, through ſin, had become ſcenes of abomination, by the interpoſition of the Mediator, were to become the abodes of righteouſneſs. Here the Serpent's head was to be bruiſed; his ſchemes confounded, and his works deſtroyed: and that by the *Woman's ſeed*, the human nature, which he had deſpiſed and degraded. Here a trophy was to be raiſed to the glory of ſovereign grace, and millions of ſouls, delivered from everlaſting deſtruction, were to preſent an offering of praiſe to HIM *that loved them, and waſhed them from their ſins in his own blood.* Here, in a word, the peculiar glory of the Godhead was to be diſplayed in ſuch a manner as to afford a leſſon of joyful amazement to the whole creation, *throughout all ages* of time, yea, *world without end!** Laſtly, Not only were the abodes of man contemplated with *rejoicing*, but the *ſons of men* themſelves regarded with *delight*. The operations of eternal Wiſdom were directed to their ſalvation; and their ſalvation was appointed to become, in return, a mirror in which the whole creation ſhould behold the operations of eternal Wiſdom.—This expreſſive paſſage contains a fulneſs of meaning, let the extent of the intelligent creation be what it may: but if it be of that extent which modern philoſophy ſuppoſes, it

* Epheſ. iii. 21.

contains a greater fulneſs ſtill. It perfectly accords with all thoſe ideas ſuggeſted, of this earth being the choſen theatre, upon which events ſhould be brought to paſs that ſhall fill creation with everlaſting joy; and well they may, if the proſpect of them, even rejoiced the heart of God!

III. *The mediation of Chriſt is repreſented in ſcripture as bringing the whole creation into union with the Church or people of God.*—

In the diſpenſation of the fulneſs of times, it is ſaid that God would *gather together in one, all things in Chriſt, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, even in him.**— Again, *It pleaſed the Father that in him ſhould all fulneſs dwell; and (having made peace through the blood of his croſs) by him to reconcile all things unto himſelf, by him, I ſay, whether things in earth, or things in heaven.*†

The language here uſed, ſuppoſes that the introduction of ſin has affected a diſunion between men and the other parts of God's creation. It is natural to ſuppoſe it ſhould be ſo. If a province of a great empire riſe up in rebellion againſt the lawful government, all communication between the inhabitants of ſuch provinces, and the faithful adherents to order and obedience, muſt be at an end. A line of ſeparation would be immediately drawn by the ſovereign, and all intercourſe between the one and the other prohibited. Nor would it leſs accord with the inclina-

* Epheſ. i. 10. † Col. i. 19, 20.

tion than with the duty of all the friends of righteouſneſs to withdraw their connexion from thoſe who were in rebellion againſt the ſupreme authority, and the general good: It muſt have been thus with regard to the holy angels on man's apoſtaſy. Thoſe who, at the creation of our world, had *ſung together*, and even *ſhouted for joy*, would now retire in diſguſt and holy indignation.

But through the mediation of Chriſt a reunion is effected. By the blood of the croſs we have peace with God; and, being reconciled to him, are united to all who love him throughout the whole extent of creation. If Paul could addreſs the Corinthians concerning one of their excluded members, who had been brought to repentance, *To whom ye forgive any thing, I alſo;* much more would the friends of righteouſneſs ſay in their addreſſes to the great Supreme, concerning an excluded member from the moral ſyſtem, *To whom* THOU *forgiveſt any thing, we alſo!*— Hence angels acknowledge Chriſtians as *brethren*, and become miniſtering ſpirits to them while inhabitants of the preſent world.*

There is another conſideration which muſt tend to cement the holy part of God's creation to the church; which is, their being *all united under one head.* A central point of union has a great effect in cementing mankind. We ſee this every day in people who ſit under the ſame miniſtry, or ſerve under

* Rev. xix. 10. Heb. i. 14.

the ſame commander, or are ſubjects of the ſame prince: whether miniſter, general, or prince, if they *love* him, they will be more or leſs united together under him.

Now it is a part of the reward of our Redeemer, for his great humiliation, that he ſhould be exalted as head over the whole creation of God. *Being found in faſhion as a man, he humbled himſelf, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the croſs.—Wherefore God alſo hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jeſus every knee ſhould bow,* of heavenly beings, of earthly, and of thoſe *under the earth.—He is the head of all principality and power. God raiſed him from the dead, and ſet him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but alſo in that which is to come: and put all things under his feet; and gave him to be the head over all things to the Church, which is his body, the fulneſs of him that filleth all in all.**

Theſe paſſages, it is true, repreſent the dominion of Chriſt as extending over the whole creation, enemies as well as friends, and things as well as perſons. But if the very enemies of God are cauſed to ſubſerve the purpoſes of Redemption, much more his friends: what the others do by conſtraint,

* Phil. ii. 8—10. Col. ii. 10. Epheſ. i. 20—22.

theſe do willingly; and the conſideration of their having *one head* muſt make them feel, as it were, nearer a-kin. And as Chriſt is *head over all things to the church, which is his body*, it is here intimated, that the happineſs of the church is, by theſe means, abundantly enlarged.

To what extent creation reaches I do not pretend to know: be that, however, as it may, the foregoing paſſages teach us to conſider the influence of Redemption as commenſurate with it, and in proportion to the magnitude of the one, ſuch muſt be the influence of the other as to the accompliſhment of re-union, and the reſtoration of happineſs.

IV. *Through the Mediation of Chriſt not only is the whole creation repreſented as augmenting the bleſſedneſs of the Church; but the Church as augmenting the bleſſedneſs of the whole creation.*—

As one member, be it ever ſo ſmall, cannot ſuffer, without the whole body, in ſome degree, ſuffering with it; ſo if we conſider our world as a member of the great body, or ſyſtem of being, it might naturally be ſuppoſed that the ill or well-being of the former would, in ſome meaſure, affect the happineſs of the latter. The fall of a planet from its orbit, in the ſolar ſyſtem, would probably have a leſs effect upon the other planets, than that of man from the moral ſyſtem upon the other parts of God's intel-

ligent creation. And when it is conſidered that man is a member of the body *diſtinguiſhed* by ſovereign favor, as poſſeſſing a nature which the Son of God delighted to honor, by taking it upon himſelf, the intereſt which the Univerſe at large, may have in his fall and recovery, may be greatly augmented.—The leproſy of *Miriam* was an event that affected the whole camp of Iſrael; nor did they proceed on their journies till ſhe was reſtored to her ſituation; and it is not unnatural to ſuppoſe, that ſomething analogous to this would be the effect of the fall and recovery of man on the whole creation.

The happineſs of the redeemed is not the ultimate end of Redemption; nor the only happineſs which will be produced by it.—God is repreſented in the ſcriptures, as conferring his favors in ſuch a way as that no creature ſhall be bleſſed *merely for his own ſake*, but that he might communicate his bleſſedneſs to others. With whatever powers, talents, or advantages we are endued, it is not merely for our gratification, but that we may contribute to the general good —God gives diſcernment to the eye, ſpeech to the tongue, ſtrength to the arm, and agility to the feet; not for the gratification of theſe members, but for the accommodation of the body. It is the ſame in other things. God *bleſſed* Abraham; and wherefore? That he might *be a bleſſing*. He bleſſed his poſterity after him; and for what purpoſe? That *in them all the nations of the earth might be bleſ-*

*ſed.** Though Iſrael was a nation *choſen* and *beloved* of God; yet it was not for their righteouſneſs, nor merely with a view to their happineſs, that they were thus diſtinguiſhed: but that he *might perform the oath which he ſware unto their fathers;*† the ſubſtance of which was, that the true religion ſhould proſper amongſt them, and be communicated by them to all other nations. The ungodly part of the Jewiſh nation viewed things, it is true, in a different light: they valued themſelves as the favorites of heaven, and looked down upon other nations with contemptuous diſlike. But it was otherwiſe with the godly: they entered into the ſpirit of the promiſe made to their fathers. Hence they prayed that *God would be merciful to them, and bleſs them, and cauſe his face to ſhine upon them;* to the end THAT HIS WAY MIGHT BE KNOWN UPON EARTH, AND HIS SAVING HEALTH AMONG ALL NATIONS.‡

The ſame ſpirit was manifeſted by the apoſtles and primitive chriſtians. They perceived that all that rich meaſure of gifts and graces by which they were diſtinguiſhed, was given them with the deſign of their communicating it to others; and this was their conſtant aim Paul felt himſelf *a debtor* both to Jews and Greeks, and ſpent his life in diffuſing the bleſſings of the goſpel, though in return he was continually treated

* Gen. xii. 2. xxii. 18.

† Deut. ix. 5. vii. 7, 8. ‡ Pſal. lxvii

as an evil doer; and the ſame might be ſaid of the other apoſtles.

Nor is this ſocial principle confined to the preſent life. According to ſcripture repreſentations the happineſs of ſaints in glory will be conferred on them, not that it may ſtop there, but be communicated to the whole moral ſyſtem. The redemption of the church has already added to the bleſſedneſs of other holy intelligences. It has furniſhed a new medium by which the glory of the divine perfections is beheld and admired. To explore the wiſdom of God in his works is the conſtant employment of holy angels, and that in which conſiſts a large proportion of their felicity. Prior to the accompliſhment of the work of redemption, they contemplated the divine character through the medium of creation and providence; but NOW *unto principalities and powers, in heavenly places, is known,* BY THE CHURCH, *the manifold wiſdom of God.** And ſo much does this laſt diſplay of divine glory exceed all that have gone before it, that thoſe who have once obtained a view of it through this medium, will certainly prefer it to every other: *Which things the angels deſire to look into.*† They do not however become indifferent to any of the divine operations: creation and providence continue to attract their attention, and are abundantly more intereſting; they now ſtudy them according to the order

* Epheſ. iii. 10. † 1 Pet. i. 12.

in which they exiſt in the divine mind, that is, in ſubſerviency to Redemption.*

But that which is already accompliſhed, is but ſmall in compariſon of what is in reſerve. At the final judgment when all the faithful will be collected together, they will become a medium through which the Lord Jeſus will be *glorified* and *admired* by the whole creation. *He ſhall come to be glorified* IN *his ſaints; and to be admired* IN *all them that believe—in that day.*† It is a truth that the ſaints of God will themſelves glorify and admire their great Deliverer, but not the truth of this paſſage; the deſign of which is to repreſent them as a medium through which he ſhall be glorified by all the friends of God in the univerſe. The great Phyſician will appear with his recovered millions; every one of whom will afford evidence of his diſintereſted love, and efficacious blood, to the whole admiring Creation.

Much the ſame ideas are conveyed to us by thoſe repreſentations in which the whole creation are either called upon to rejoice on account of our Redemption, or deſcribed as actually rejoicing and praiſing the Redeemer. Thus David having ſpoken of God's mercy which was *from everlaſting to everlaſting towards the children of men*; addreſſes ALL HIS WORKS, IN ALL PLACES OF HIS DOMINION, *to bleſs his name.*‡ John al-

* Col. i. 16. *by* him, and *for* him.

† 2 Theſ. i. 10. ‡ Pſ. ciii. 17—22.

ſo informs us, ſaying, *I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne, and the living creatures, and the elders: and the number of them was ten thouſand times ten thouſand, and thouſands of thouſands; ſaying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was ſlain to receive power, and riches, and wiſdom, and ſtrength, and honour, and glory, and bleſſing. And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and ſuch as are in the ſea, and all that are in them, heard I, ſaying, Bleſſing, and honour, and glory and power, be unto him that ſitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.**

The phraſeology of theſe paſſages is ſuch, that no one can reaſonably doubt whether the writers intended by it to expreſs the whole upright intelligent creation, be it of what extent it may: and if it be of that extent which philoſophy ſuppoſes, the greater muſt be the influence and importance of the work of Redemption.

V. *The ſcriptures give us to expect that the earth itſelf, as well as its redeemed inhabitants, ſhall at a future period be purified, and reunited to the holy empire of God.*—

We are taught to pray, and conſequently to hope, that when *the kingdom of God* ſhall univerſally prevail, *his will ſhall be done on earth as it is* now *in heaven*:† but if ſo, earth itſelf muſt become, as it were, a part of heaven.

* Rev. v. 11—13. † Matt. vi. 10.

That we may form a clear and comprehenſive view of our Lord's words, and of this part of the ſubject, be it obſerved, that the ſcriptures ſometimes diſtinguiſhed between *the kingdom of God*, and *that of Chriſt*. Though the object of both, be the triumph of truth and righteouſneſs, yet the mode of adminiſtration is different. The one is natural, the other delegated: the latter is in ſubſerviency to the former, and ſhall be finally ſucceeded by it. Chriſt is repreſented as acting in our world by delegation: as if a King had commiſſioned his Son to go and reduce a certain rebellious province, and reſtore it to his dominion. The period allotted for this work extends from the time of the revelation of the promiſed Seed, to the day of judgment. The operations are *progreſſive*. If it had ſeemed good in his ſight, he could have overturned the power of Satan in a ſhort period; but his wiſdom ſaw fit to accompliſh it by degrees. Like the commander of an invading army, he firſt takes poſſeſſion of one poſt, then of another, then of a third, and ſo on, till by and by, the whole country falls into his hands. And as the progreſs of a conqueror would be more rapid after a few of the ſtrongeſt fortreſſes had ſurrendered, (inaſmuch as things would then approach faſt to a criſis, to a breaking up, as it were, of the power of the enemy,) ſo it has been with the kingdom of Chriſt, and ſuch will be its progreſs before the end of time. In the early ages of the world, but

little was done. At one time, true religion appears to have exiſted only in a few families. Afterwards it aſſumed a national appearance. After this it was addreſſed to all nations. And before the cloſe of time all nations ſhall be ſubjected to the obedience of Chriſt. This ſhall be the *breaking up* of Satan's empire. Now as on the conqueſt of a rebellious province the delegated authority of the conqueror would ceaſe, and the national government of the empire reſume its original form; ſo Chriſt is repreſented as *delivering up the kingdom to the Father, that God may be All in All.* This is the ultimatum of the Meſſiah's kingdom; and this appears to be the object for which he taught his diſciples to pray.

As on the conqueſt of a rebellious province, ſome would be pardoned, and others puniſhed; as every veſtige of rebellion would be effaced, and law, peace, and order, flow in their ancient channels; ſuch a period might with propriety be termed *a reſtitution of all things.** Such will be the event of the laſt judgment, which is deſcribed as the concluding exerciſe of the delegated authority of Chriſt.

And as on the conqueſt of a rebellious province, and the reſtitution of peace and order, that province, inſtead of being any longer ſeparate from the reſt of the empire, would become a component part of it, and

* Acts iii. 19.

the King's will would be done in it, as it had been done without interruption in the loyal part of his territories; ſuch is the repreſentation given with reſpect to our world, and the holy parts of God's dominions. A period will arrive when the will of God ſhall be done on earth as it is now done in heaven. This, however, will never be the caſe while any veſtige of moral evil remains. It muſt be after the general conflagration; which, though it will deſtroy every kind of evil, root and branch, that now prevails upon the face of the earth, and will terminate the generations of Adam, who have poſſeſſed it; yet will not ſo deſtroy the earth itſelf but that it ſhall ſurvive its fiery trial, and, as I apprehend, become the everlaſting abode of righteouſneſs; a part of the holy empire of God.—Nor is it, perhaps, improbable, that it may ever continue the reſort, if not the frequent abode of thoſe who are redeemed from it.—An attachment to place we know is at preſent deeply implanted in our nature. The inhabitants of the moſt inhoſpitable regions generally love their native country, and would not change it for any other. Certain particular places, where ſome of the moſt intereſting events have been tranſacted, when viſited at ſome diſtance of time, become a conſiderable ſource of delight. Such was *Bethel* to Jacob, and *Tabor*, no doubt, to the three diſciples. And why may not a view of *Bethlehem*, of *Gethſemane*, of *Calvary*, and of a thouſand other places where God has ap-

peared for us, afford a ſource of everlaſting enjoyment?

However this may be, the ſcriptures give us to underſtand, that though *the elements ſhall melt with fervent heat, and the earth, and the works that are therein, ſhall be burnt up*; yet, *according to promiſe*, we are to *look for new heavens, and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteouſneſs.** By the *new heavens* here is plainly to be underſtood ſo much of the elements as ſhall have been affected by the general conflagration; and by the *new earth*, the earth after it is purified by it.

Much to the ſame purpoſe is the account given towards the cloſe of the Revelation of John. After a deſcription of the general judgment, it follows, *And I ſaw a new heaven, and a new earth: for the firſt heaven and the firſt earth were paſſed away.—And I John ſaw the Holy City, New Jeruſalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her huſband.*—When the earth ſhall have become a part of God's holy empire, heaven itſelf may then be ſaid to be come down upon it; ſeeing all that is now aſcribed to the one, will be true of the other. *Behold, the tabernacle of God ſhall be with men, and he will dwell with them; and they ſhall be his people, and God himſelf ſhall be with them, and ſhall be their God.—And God ſhall wipe away all tears from their eyes: and there ſhall be no more death, neither ſor-*

* 2 Pet. iii. 12, 13.

*row, nor crying, neither ſhall there be any more pain; for the former things ſhall be paſſed away. And he that ſat upon the Throne, ſaid, Behold I make all things new. And he ſaid unto me, Write: for theſe words are true and faithful.**

If the great end of Redemption be the reunion of this world to the holy empire of God; and if ſuch reunion be accompanied with a mutual augmentation of bleſſedneſs, then the importance of the one muſt bear ſome proportion to the magnitude of the other. Upon any ſyſtem of philoſophy, Redemption is great; but upon that which ſo amazingly magnifies intelligent creation, it muſt be great beyond expreſſion.

VI. *The ſcriptures repreſent the puniſhment of the finally impenitent as appointed for an example to the reſt of the creation.*—

Sodom and Gomorrha, and the cities about them, in giving themſelves over to fornication, and going after ſtrange fleſh, are ſet forth FOR AN EXAMPLE, *ſuffering the vengeance of eternal fire. And her ſmoke* (the ſmoke of Babylon) *roſe up for ever and ever. And the four and twenty elders, and the four living creatures fell down and worſhipped God that ſat on the Throne, ſaying, Amen; Alleluia.*†

The miſeries of the damned are never repreſented as inflicted upon them from ſuch a kind of wrath or vengeance as bears no re-

* Rev. xxi. 1—5.

† Jude vii. Rev. xix. 3, 4.

lation to the general good. *God is love;* and in none of his proceedings does he violate this principle, or lose sight of the well-being of creation in general. The manifestation of his glory is not only inseparably connected with this object, but consists in accomplishing it.

It is necessary for the general good that God's abhorrence of moral evil should be marked by some strong and durable expression of it; so that no one subject of his empire can overlook it. Such an expression was the death of Christ, his only begotten Son: and this availeth on behalf of all who acquiesce in his salvation: but all who do not, or who profess not such a temper of heart as would acquiesce in it if it were presented to them, must themselves be made sacrifices to his justice; and so like enemies and traitors to a human government, must be made to answer such an end by their death as shall counteract the ill example afforded by their life. What is said of the barren vine is applicable to the finally impenitent: *It is not fit for any work—it is good for nothing but to be burned!** The only way in which they promote the general good is by their overthrow: Like the censers of Korah and his company, which were made into *broad plates for a covering to the altar; that they might be a sign to the children of Israel* in future generations;† or like Lot's wife, who was

* Ezek. xv. 2—5. † Numb. xvi. 38.

converted into a *pillar of ſalt*, or a laſting monument of divine diſpleaſure!

If the grand end of future puniſhment be *example*, this muſt ſuppoſe the exiſtence of an intelligent creation, who ſhall profit by it; and it ſhould ſeem of a creation of magnitude; as it accords with the conduct of neither God nor man to puniſh a great number for an example to a few.

This truth affords a ſatisfactory idea of the divine government, whether there be a multiplicity of inhabited worlds or not: but if there be, it is ſtill more ſatisfactory; as on this ſuppoſition the number of thoſe who ſhall be finally loſt may bear far leſs proportion to the whole of the intelligent creation, than a ſingle execution to the inhabitants of a great empire. It is true, the loſs to thoſe who are loſt, will be nothing abated by this conſideration; perhaps, on the contrary, it may be augmented; and to them the divine government will ever appear gloomy: but to thoſe who judge of things impartially, and upon an extenſive ſcale, it will appear to contain no more of a diſparagement to the government of the univerſe, than the execution of a murderer, once in a hundred years, would be to the government of a nation.

And now, I appeal to the intelligent, the ſerious, and the candid reader, whether there be any truth in what Mr. Paine aſſerts, that to admit "that God created a plurality of "worlds, at leaſt as numerous as what we "call ſtars, renders the Chriſtian ſyſtem of

" faith at once little and ridiculous, and ſcat-
" ters it in the mind like feathers in the air."
—On the contrary, it might be proved that every ſyſtem of philoſophy is little in compariſon of Chriſtianity. Philoſophy may expand our ideas of creation; but it neither inſpires a love to the *moral* character of the Creator, nor a well grounded hope of eternal life. Philoſophy, at moſt, can only place us upon the top of Piſgah: there, like Moſes, we muſt die. It gives us no poſſeſſion of the good land; it is the province of Chriſtianity to add, ALL IS YOURS! When you have aſcended to the height of human diſcovery, there are things, and things of infinite moment too, that are utterly beyond its reach. Revelation is the medium, and the only medium, by which, ſtanding, as it were, " on nature's Alps," we diſcover things which eye hath not ſeen, nor ear heard, and of which it hath never entered into the heart of man to conceive.

CONCLUDING ADDRESSES,

TO

Deists, Jews, and Christians,

WHETHER the writer of these sheets can justly hope, that what he advances will attract the attention of unbelievers, he does not pretend to say. If, however, it should fall into the hands of individuals amongst them, he earnestly entreats that, for their own sakes, they would attend to what follows, with seriousness.

TO DEISTS.

Fellow-Men,

IT is hoped that nothing in the preceding pages can be fairly construed into a want of good will towards any of you. If I know my heart, it is not you, but your mischievous principles that are the objects of my dislike.

In the former part of this performance I have endeavored to prove, that the system which you embrace, overlooks the moral character of God, refuses to worship him, affords no standard of right and wrong, undermines the most efficacious motives to virtuous action, actually produces a torrent of vice, and

leaves mankind, under all their miſeries, to periſh without hope; in fine, that it is an immoral ſyſtem, pregnant with deſtruction to the human race. Unleſs you be able to overturn what is there advanced, or, at leaſt, be conſcious that it is not true with regard to yourſelves, you have reaſon to be ſeriously alarmed. To embrace a ſyſtem of immorality is the ſame thing as to be enemies to all righteouſneſs; neither to fear God, nor regard man; and what good fruit you can expect to reap from it, in this world or another, it is difficult to conceive. But, alas, inſtead of being alarmed at the immorality of your principles, is there no reaſon to ſuſpect that it is on this very account you cheriſh them? You can occaſionally praiſe the morality of Jeſus Chriſt; but are you ſincere? Why then do you not walk by it? However you may magnify other difficulties, which you have induſtriouſly labored to diſcover in the Bible, your actions declare that it is the holineſs of its doctrines and precepts, that more than any thing elſe offends you. The manifeſt object at which you aim, both for yourſelves and the world, is an exemption from its reſtraints. Your general conduct, if put into words, amounts to this—*Come, let us break his bands, and caſt away his cords from us.*

Circumſtances, of late years, have much favored your deſign. Your party has gained the aſcendancy in a great nation, and has been conſequently increaſing in other na-

tions. Hence it is, perhaps, that your ſpirits are raiſed, and that a higher tone is aſſumed in your ſpeeches and writings than has been uſual on former occaſions.—You are *great*, you are *enlightened;* yes, you have found out the ſecret, and have only to rid the world of Chriſtianity in order to render it happy. But be not too confident. You are not the firſt who have ſet themſelves againſt the Lord, and againſt his anointed. —You have overthrown ſuperſtition; but vaunt not againſt Chriſtianity.—Of a truth you have deſtroyed the gods of Rome, for they were no gods; but let this ſuffice you. It is hard to kick againſt the pricks.

Whatever ſucceſs may attend your cauſe, if it be an immoral one, and eſpouſed *on that very account*, it cannot poſſibly ſtand.—It muſt fall, and you may expect to be buried in its ruins. It may be thought ſufficient for me to reaſon on the ſyſtem itſelf, without deſcending to the *motives* of thoſe who imbibe it; but where motives are manifeſted by actions, they become objects of human cognizance. Nor is there any hope of your unbelief being removed, but by ſomething that ſhall reach the *cauſe* of it. My deſire is neither to inſult nor flatter, but ſeriouſly to expoſtulate with you; if God peradventure may give you repentance to the acknowledgment of the truth. Three things, in particular, I would earneſtly recommend to your ſerious conſideration.

How it was that you firſt imbibed your preſent principles: How it is that almoſt all your writers, at one time or other, bear teſtimony in favor of Chriſtianity; and How it comes to paſs that your principles fail you, as they are frequently known to do, in a dying hour.

Firſt, How was it that you first renounced Christianity, and imbibed your present principles? Retrace the proceſs of your minds, and aſk your conſciences as you proceed, whether all was fair and upright. Nothing is more common than for perſons of relaxed morals to attribute their change of conduct to a change of ſentiments, or views relative to thoſe ſubjects. It is galling to one's own feelings, and mean in the account of others, to *act againſt principle:* but if a perſon can once perſuade himſelf to think favorably of thoſe things which he has formerly accounted ſinful, and can furniſh a plea for them, which, at leaſt, may ſerve to parry the cenſures of mankind, he will feel much more at eaſe, and be able to put on a better face when he mingles in ſociety. Whatever inward ſtings may annoy his peace under certain occaſional qualms, yet he has not to reproach himſelf, nor can others reproach him with that inconſiſtency of character as in former inſtances. *Rouſſeau* confeſſes he found in the reaſonings of a certain lady, with whom he lived in the greateſt poſſible familiarity, all thoſe ideas *which he had occaſion for*—: Have you not found

the ſame in the converſation and writings of deiſts?—Did you not, previous to your rejection of Chriſtianity, indulge in vicious courſes; and, while indulging in theſe courſes, did not its holy precepts, and awful threatenings gall your ſpirits?—Were you not like perſons gathering forbidden fruit amidſt ſhowers of arrows; and had you not recourſe to your preſent principles for a ſhield againſt them?—If you cannot honeſtly anſwer theſe queſtions in the negative, you are in an evil caſe.—You may flatter yourſelves for a while that perhaps there may be no hereafter, or at leaſt no judgment to come; but you know the time is not far diſtant when you muſt go and ſee: and then, if you ſhould be miſtaken, What will you do?

Many of you have deſcended from godly parents, and have had a religious education. Has not your infidelity ariſen from the diſlike which you conceived in early life to religious exerciſes? Family worſhip was a wearineſs to you; and the cautions, warnings, and counſels which were given you, inſtead of having any proper effect, only irritated your corruptions. You longed to be from under the yoke. Since that time, your parents, it may be, have been removed by death; or if they live, they may have loſt their controul over you. So, now you are free. But ſtill ſomething is wanting to eraſe the *prejudices* of education, which, in ſpite of all your efforts, will accompany you, and embitter

your preſent purſuits. For this purpoſe a friend puts into your hands *The Age of Reaſon*, or ſome production of the kind. You read it with avidity. This is the very thing you wanted. You have long ſuſpected the truth of Chriſtianity; but had not courage to oppoſe it. Now then you are a philoſopher; yes, a philoſopher!—'Our fathers," ſay you, 'might be well-meaning people, 'but they were impoſed upon by prieſts.—'The world gets more *enlightened* now-a-'days. There is no need of ſuch rigidneſs. 'The Supreme Being (if there be one) can 'never have created the pleaſures of life, but 'for the purpoſe of enjoyment. Avaunt, ye 'ſelf-denying caſuiſts! Nature is the law of 'man!'

Was not this, or ſomething nearly reſembling it, the proceſs of your minds? And are you now ſatisfied? I do not aſk whether you have been able to defend your cauſe againſt aſſailants nor whether you have gained converts to your way of thinking: you may have done both; but are you ſatisfied with yourſelves? Do you really believe yourſelves to be in the right way? Have you no miſgivings of heart? Is there not ſomething within you which occaſionally whiſpers, 'My parents were righteous, and I am wicked:—O that my ſoul were in their ſouls' ſtead!'

Ah, young men! If ſuch be the occaſional revoltings of your mind, what are you doing in laboring to gain others over to your way of thinking? Can you, from experience,

honeſtly promiſe them peace of mind? Can you go about to perſuade them that there is no hell, when, if you would ſpeak the truth, you muſt acknowledge that you have already an earneſt of it kindled in your boſoms? If counſels were not loſt upon you, I would intreat you to be contented with deſtroying your own ſouls. Have pity on your fellow-creatures, if you have none upon yourſelves? Nay, ſpare yourſelves ſo much, at leaſt, as not to incur the everlaſting execrations of your moſt intimate acquaintance. If Chriſtianity ſhould prove, what your conſciences, in your moſt ſerious moments, tell you it is, you are doing this, every day of your lives.

Secondly, Conſider HOW IT IS THAT ALMOST ALL YOUR WRITERS, AT ONE TIME OR OTHER, BEAR TESTIMONY IN FAVOR OF CHRISTIANITY. It were eaſy to collect, from thoſe very writings which were deſigned to undermine the Chriſtian Religion, hundreds of teſtimonies in its favor. *Voltaire* and *Rouſſeau*, as we have ſeen already,* have, in their fits, gone far towards contradicting all which they have written againſt it. *Bolingbroke* has done the ſame. Such ſentences as the following may be found in his publications:—"Suppoſing Chriſtianity to have "been a human invention, it has been the "moſt amiable invention that was ever im-"poſed on mankind for their good—Chris-"tianity, as it came out of the hand of God,

* Part II. Chap. III. pp. 188, 189.

" if I may uſe the expreſſion, was a moſt
" ſimple and intelligible rule of belief, wor-
" ſhip, and manners, which is the true no-
" tion of a religion.—The goſpel is, in all
" caſes, one continued leſſon of the ſtricteſt
" morality, of juſtice, of benevolence, and of
" univerſal charity."*—*Paine*, perhaps, has ſaid as little in this way as any of your writers, yet he has profeſſed a reſpect for the character of Jeſus Chriſt.—" He was," ſays he, " a virtuous and an amiable man. The
" morality that he preached and practiſed
" was of the moſt benevolent kind."†

In what manner will you go about to account for theſe conceſſions? Chriſtian writers, thoſe, at leaſt, who are ſincerely attached to the cauſe, are not ſeized with theſe fits of inconſiſtency. How is it that yours, like the worſhippers of Baal, ſhould thus be continually cutting themſelves with knives?—You muſt either give up your leaders as a ſet of men, who, while they were laboring to perſuade the world of the hypocriſy of prieſts, were, themſelves the moſt infamous of all hypocrites; or, which will be equally fatal to your cauſe, you muſt attribute it to occaſional convictions, which they felt and expreſſed, though contrary to the general ſtrain of their writings. Is it not an unfavorable character of your cauſe, that, in this particular, it exactly reſembles that of vice

* Works, Vol. IV. pp 394, 395. Vol. V. pp. 188, 189.

† *Age of Reaſon*, Part I. p. 5.

itſelf? Vicious men will often bear teſtimony in favor of virtue, eſpecially on the near approach of death; but virtuous men never return the compliment by bearing teſtimony in favor of vice. We are not afraid of Chriſtians thus betraying their cauſe; but neither your writers, nor your conſciences, are to be truſted in a ſerious hour.

Thirdly, Conſider HOW IT COMES TO PASS THAT YOUR PRINCIPLES FAIL YOU, AS THEY ARE FREQUENTLY KNOWN TO DO, IN A DYING HOUR?—It is a rule with wiſe men, *ſo to live as they ſhall wiſh they had, when they come to die.* How do you ſuppoſe you ſhall wiſh you had lived in that day?—Look at the deaths of your greateſt men, and ſee what their principles have done for them at laſt. Mark the end of that apoſtle and high-prieſt of your profeſſion, *Voltaire*; and try if you can find in it either integrity, or hope, or any thing that ſhould render it an object of envy.* Why is it that ſo many

* The following particulars, among many others, are recorded of this writer by his Biographer CONDORCET, a man after his own heart. Firſt, That he conceived the deſign of overturning the Chriſtian Religion; and that by his own hand. ——"I am wearied," ſaid he, "of hearing it repeated that twelve men were ſufficient to eſtabliſh Chriſtianity; and I wiſh to prove there needs but one to deſtroy it." Secondly, That in purſuit of this object he was threatened with a perſecution, to avoid which, he received the ſacrament, and publicly declared his reſpect for the church, and his diſdain of his detractors, namely, thoſe who had called in queſtion his Chriſtianity! Thirdly, That in his laſt illneſs, in Paris, being deſirous of obtaining what is called Chriſtian burial, he ſent for a prieſt, to whom he declared, that he "died in the Catholic faith, in which he was born." Fourthly, That another prieſt

of you faint in the day of trial? If your cauſe were good, you would defend it with uprightneſs, and die with inward ſatisfaction. But is it ſo? Mr. *Paine* flatters himſelf that his principles will bear him up in the proſpect of death;* and it is poſſible that he may brave it out in ſome ſuch manner as David Hume did.—Such inſtances, however, are rare. For one unbeliever that maintains his courage, many might be produced whoſe hearts have failed them, and who have trembled for the conſequences of their infidelity.

On the other hand, you cannot produce a ſingle inſtance of a Chriſtian, WHO, AT THE APPROACH OF DEATH, WAS TROUBLED, OR TERRIFIED IN HIS CONSCIENCE, FOR HAVING BEEN A CHRISTIAN. Many have been afraid, in that day, leſt their faith in Chriſt ſhould not prove genuine; but who that has put his truſt in him was ever known to be apprehenſive leſt he ſhould at laſt deceive him? Can you account for this difference? If you have diſcovered the true religion, and ours be all fable and impoſture, how comes it to paſs that the iſſue of things is what it is? Do gold, and ſilver, and precious ſtones periſh in the fire; and do wood, and hay, and ſtubble endure it?

I have admitted that Mr. Paine may poſ-

(Curate of the pariſh) troubled him with queſtions —Among other things he aſked, "Do you believe the divinity of Jeſus Chriſt?" —"In the name of God, Sir," replied Voltaire, "ſpeak to me no more of that man, but let me die in peace."

* *Age of Reaſon*, Part II. Pref.

ſibly brave it out till the laſt; but if he does, his courage *may be* merely aſſumed. Pride will induce men to diſguiſe the genuine feelings of their hearts, on more occaſions than one. We hear much of courage among duellists; but little credit is due to what they ſay, if, while the words proceed from their lips, we ſee them approach each other with paleneſs and trembling. Yea more, If Mr. Paine's courage in death be not different from what it already is in the proſpect of it, it *certainly will be* merely aſſumed. He has given full proof of what his courage amounts to in what he has advanced on the certainty of a future ſtate. He acknowledges the poſſibility of a future judgment: yea, he admits it to be rational to believe that there will be one. "The power," he ſays, "that called us into "being, can, if he pleaſe, and when he pleas-"es, call us to account for the manner in "which we have lived here; and, there-"fore, without ſeeking any further motive "for the belief, it is rational to believe that "he will, for we know before hand that he "can."* I ſhall not ſtop to enquire into the juſtneſs of Mr. Paine's reaſoning from what God can do to what he will do: it is ſufficient for me that he admits it to be "rational to believe that God will call men to account for the manner in which they have lived here." And can he admit this truth, and not tremble? Mark his firmneſs. After

* *Age of Reaſon*, Part II. p. 100.

acknowledging that a future judgment is the object of rational *belief*, he retracts what he has ſaid by reducing it to only a *probability*, which is to have the influence of belief:—Yea, as if that were too terrible an idea, he brings it down to a mere *poſſibility*. The reaſon which he gives for theſe reductions is, that "If we knew it as a fact, we ſhould be the mere *ſlaves of terror*." Indeed? But wherefore? Chriſtians believe in a judgment to come, and they are not the ſlaves of terror. They have an *advocate* as well as a judge, by believing in whom the terror of judgment is removed. And tho' Mr. Paine rejects this ground of conſolation, yet if things be as he has repreſented them, I do not perceive why he ſhould be terrified. He writes as though he ſtood on a very reſpectable footing with his Creator; he is not "an outcaſt, a beggar, or a worm;" he needs no mediator: no indeed! He "ſtands in the ſame relative condition with his Maker he ever did ſtand ſince man exiſted."*—Very well; of what then is he afraid?—God is good, and will exceed the very beſt of us in goodneſs." On this ground Lord *Shafteſbury* aſſures us, "Deiſts can have no dread or ſuſpicion to render them uneaſy: for it is malice only, and not goodneſs, which can make them afraid."† Very well, I ſay again, of what then is Mr. Paine afraid? If a Being full of goodneſs will not hurt him, he will

* *Age of Reaſon*, Part I. p. 21.
† *Characteriſtics*, Vol. I. § 5.

not be hurt. Why ſhould he be terrified at a *certain* hereafter? Why not meet his Creator with cheerfulneſs, and confidence? Inſtead of this, he knows of no method by which he may be exemped from *terror*, but that of reducing future judgment to a mere *poſſibility*; leaving room for ſome faint hope, at leaſt, that what he profeſſes to believe as true, may in the end prove falſe. Such is the courage of your bluſtering hero. Unhappy man! Unhappy people! Your principles will not ſupport you in death, nor ſo much as in the contemplation of a hereafter.

Let Mr. Paine's hypotheſis be admitted, and that in its loweſt form, that there is only a *poſſibility* of a judgment to come, this is ſufficient to evince your folly, and if you thought on the ſubject, to deſtroy your peace. This alone has induced many of you, in your laſt moments, to wiſh that you had lived like Chriſtians. If it be poſſible that there may be a judgment to come, why ſhould it not be equally poſſible that Chriſtianity itſelf may be true? And if it ſhould, on what ground do you ſtand? If it be otherwiſe, Chriſtians have nothing to fear. While they are taught to deny ungodlineſs, and worldly luſts, and to live ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly in this preſent world, whatever may prove true with reſpect to another, it is preſumed they are ſafe; but if that Saviour whom ye have deſpiſed ſhould be indeed the Son of God; if that name which ye have blaſphemed ſhould be the only one given under heaven,

and among men, by which you can be ſaved; what a ſituation muſt you be in! You may wiſh at preſent not to be told of him; yea, even in death, it may be a vexation, as it was to *Voltaire*, to hear of him; but hear of him you muſt, and what is more, you muſt appear before him.

I cannot conclude this addreſs without expreſſing my earneſt deſire for your ſalvation; and, whether you will hear, or whether you will forbear, reminding you that our Redeemer is merciful. He can have compaſſion on the ignorant, and them who are out of the way. The door of mercy is not yet ſhut. At preſent you are invited, and even intreated to enter in. But if you ſtill continue hardened againſt him, you may find, to your coſt, that the abuſe of mercy gives an edge to juſtice; and that to be cruſhed to atoms by falling rocks, or buried in oblivion at the bottom of mountains, were rather to be choſen than an expoſure to the wrath of the Lamb.

TO THE JEWS.

Beloved for the fathers' ſakes!

HE whom ye have long rejected, looked upon Jeruſalem, and wept over it.—With tears he pronounced upon that famous city, a doom, which, according to your own writer, Joſephus, was ſoon after accom-

pliſhed. In imitation of our Lord and Saviour we alſo could weep over your preſent ſituation. There are thouſands in Britain, as well as in other nations, whoſe daily prayer is, that you may be ſaved Hear me patiently, and candidly. Your preſent and everlaſting good is the object of my deſire.

It is not my deſign in this brief addreſs to go over the various topics in diſpute between us. Many have engaged in this work, and, I hope, to ſome good purpoſe. The late addreſſes to you, both from the pulpit and the preſs, as they were dictated by pure benevolence, certainly deſerve, and, I truſt, have gained, in ſome degree, your candid attention. All that I ſhall ſay will be compriſed in a few ſuggeſtions, which I ſuppoſe to ariſe from the ſubject of the preceding pages.

You have long ſojourned among men who have been called Chriſtians. You have ſeen much evil in them; and they have ſeen much in you. The hiſtory of your own nation, and that of every other, confirms one of the leading doctrines of both your and our Scriptures, *the depravity of human nature.* But in your commerce with mankind, you muſt have had opportunity of diſtinguiſhing between nominal and ſerious Chriſtians. Great numbers in your nation, even in its beſt days, were wicked men; and great numbers in every nation, at preſent, are the ſame. But can you not perceive a people ſcattered through various denominations of Chriſtians, who fear God, and regard man;

who, inſtead of treating you with a haughty contempt, as being ſtrangers ſcattered among the nations, diſcover a tender regard towards you on that very account; who, while they are grieved for the hardneſs of your hearts, and hurt at your ſcornful rejection of HIM whom their ſoul loveth, are nevertheleſs ardently deſirous of your ſalvation? Are you not acquainted with Chriſtians whoſe utmoſt revenge, if they could have their will of you, for all your hard ſpeeches, would be to be inſtrumental in turning you from what they believe to be the power of Satan unto God?

Let me farther appeal to you, Whether Chriſtians of this deſcription be not the true children of Abraham, the true ſucceſſors of your patriarchs and prophets, rather than thoſe of an oppoſite ſpirit, though literally deſcended from their loins. You muſt be aware, that, even in the times of David, a genuine Iſraelite was *a man of a pure heart;* and in the times of the prophets, apoſtate Iſraelites were accounted as *Ethiopians.**—Your anceſtors were men of whom the world was not worthy: but where will you now look for ſuch characters among you as *Abraham*, *Iſaac*, and *Jacob*: as *Samuel*, *David*, *Hezekiah*, and *Joſiah*; as *Daniel*, *Ezra*, *Nehemiah*, and many others?—While you garniſh their ſepulchres, have you not manifeſtly loſt their ſpirit? This is a fact that ought to alarm you, and lead you ſeriouſly to examine whether you have not forſaken

* Pſal. lxxiii. 1. Amos ix. 7.

their faith. There is one thing which has particularly ſtruck my mind, and which I would earneſtly recommend to your conſideration, namely, *the temper of modern infidels towards your fathers, towards you, and towards us.*

You need not be told that deiſtical writers invariably treat your fathers with ſcorn and diſlike. Juſt as Appion, and other Greek writers, poured contempt upon your nation; juſt as the more ancient *Moabites* reproached, and *proudly magnified themſelves againſt the people of the Lord of Hoſts*;* ſo do all our modern infidels. But from the time that your fathers rejected HIM in whom we believe as the Lord Meſſiah, though you have been expoſed to the chaſtiſements of heaven, and to much injurious treatment from pretended Chriſtians; yet deiſts, the common enemies of revelation, have been, comparatively ſpeaking, reconciled to you. So, however, it appears to me. I do not recollect to have met with a ſingle reflection upon you in any of their writings. On the contrary, they ſeem to feel themſelves near a-kin to you. Your enmity to Jeſus ſeems to be the price of their forgiveneſs: like Herod and Pontius Pilate, you become friends in the day of his crucifixion. Mr. *Paine*, tho' his writings abound in ſneers againſt your nation, *prior* to its rejection of Chriſt, yet appears to be well reconciled to *you*, and willing to admit your lame account of the body of Jeſus being ſtolen away.† Ought you not

* Zeph. ii. 10. † *Age of Reaſon*, Part I. p. 6, 7.

to be alarmed at theſe things? Serioufly examine whether you have not forſaken the God of your fathers, and become the friends and allies of men who hate both HIM and them.

The hatred of infidels has long been transferred from you to us. Whether, in the language of the New Teſtament, we be the true *children of Abraham* or not, we inherit that reproach and diſlike from unbelievers which was hereafter the portion of the godly Iſraelites. On what account were your fathers hated by the practical atheiſts of their day? Was it not becauſe of their *devotedneſs to God?* It was this in David that provoked the reſentment of the children of Belial, and rendered them his determined enemies.—They were continually jeering at his *prayers*, his *tears*, and his *truſt* in Jehovah; turning that which, in reality, was his *glory into ſhame;* and afflicting him in his affliction, by ſcornfully enquiring, *Where is thy God?** Such is the treatment which the *godly* part of your nation received in all ages, both from heathens abroad, and impious characters at home;† and ſuch is the treatment which ſerious Chriſtians continue to receive from ungodly men to this day: but are you hated and reproached *on this account?*

Of late years it has been frequently pleaded, that the principal objections to your em-

* Pſal. xxii. 8. iv. 2. xlii. 3. xxxi. 18. xl. 15.
† Pſal. lxxix. 10. cxv. 2. Joel ii. 17. Mic. vii. 8, 9, 10. Iſai. lxvi. 5.

bracing the Chriſtian religion are found in the doctrines of the Trinity, the deity of Chriſt, and atonement by his death; doctrines which the greater part of Chriſtians hold to be taught in the New Teſtament.—But thoſe who impute your conduct to theſe cauſes, muſt have nearly as mean an opinion of your rationality as they have of ours; with whom they ſay, "there is no reaſoning; and that we are to be pitied, and conſidered as under debility of mind in one reſpect, however ſenſible and rational in others."* What have the principles, which, in our judgment, are taught in the New Teſtament, to do with your acknowledging Jeſus to be the Meſſiah, and the Chriſtian Religion to be of God? Let theſe poſitions be admitted, and examine the New Teſtament for yourſelves. If you were not conſidered as poſſeſſing a ſufficient degree of good ſenſe to diſtinguiſh between Chriſtianity and the creed of any particular party of Chriſtians, it is ſurpriſing that *rational Chriſtians* ſhould think of writing addreſſes to you. For our parts we could almoſt be ſatisfied that you ſhould decide the controverſy, whether the doctrines before mentioned be taught in the New Teſtament, or not? As to removing theſe ſtumbling blocks, as ſome call them, out of your way, we have no inclination to attempt it. Only imbibe the ſpirit of your

* Lindſey's *Catechiſts*, Inquiry 6.

anceſtors, and they will preſently ceaſe to be ſtumbling blocks. Believe Moſes, and you will believe Jeſus; and believing Jeſus, neither his claiming to be the *Son of God*, and conſequently *equal with God*, nor his inſiſting upon his *fleſh being the life of the world*, will offend you. On the contrary, whenever the ſpirit of grace, and of ſupplications, is poured out upon you, and you come to look on HIM whom ye have pierced, and mourn, you will join in the worſhip of him; and the doctrine of atonement, by his death, will be to you a fountain ſet open for ſin and uncleanneſs.*

You live in expectation of being reſtored to your own land. We expect the ſame thing, and rejoice in the belief of it. The Old and the New Teſtament agree in predicting it.† But the ſame prophets that have foretold your return to Canaan, have alſo foretold that you muſt be brought to *repent of your ſins, and to ſeek Jehovah your God, and David your king.*‡—Your holy land will avail you but little, unleſs you be a holy people.

Finally, You admit, I ſuppoſe, that tho' we ſhould err in believing Jeſus to be the Meſſiah; yet while we deny ungodlineſs and worldly luſts, and live ſoberly, righteouſly and godly in this preſent world, it is an error that may not affect our eternal ſalvation: but if the error be on your ſide, on what

* Zech. xii. 10—14. xiii. 1.

† Ezek. xxxvii. Luke xxi. 24. ‡ Hoſ. iii. 5.

ground do you ſtand? Your fathers, in this caſe, were murderers of the Prince of Life; and by adopting their principles, you make the deed your own. His blood lies upon you, and upon your children. The terrible deſtruction of your city by the Romans, and the hardneſs of heart to which you have been given up, are ſymptoms of that wrath which is come upon you to the uttermoſt. Repent and believe the goſpel, that you may eſcape the wrath to come!

TO CHRISTIANS.

Beloved Brethren!

IT is witneſſed of David that he *ſerved the will of God in his generation.* Every generation has its peculiar work. The preſent age is diſtinguiſhed, you know, by the progreſs of infidelity. We have long been exempted from perſecution; and he whoſe fan is in his hand, perceiving his floor to ſtand in need of purging, ſeems determined, by new trials, to purge it. The preſent is a winnowing time. If we wiſh to ſerve the will of God in it, we muſt carefully attend to thoſe duties which ſuch a ſtate of things impoſes upon us.

In the firſt place, Let us *look well to the ſincerity of our hearts; and ſee to it that our Chriſtianity is vital, practical, and decided.*—

An army called to engage after a long peace, requires to be examined, and every one ſhould examine himſelf. Many become ſoldiers when danger is at a diſtance.—The mighty hoſt of Midianites were overcome by a ſelected band. A proclamation was iſſued through the army of Iſrael, "Whoſoever is fearful and afraid, let him return;" and after a great dimunition from cowardice, the reſt muſt be brought down to the water, to be tried.—Such, or nearly ſuch, may be the trials of the Church; thoſe who overcome may be reduced to a ſmall company in compariſon to thoſe who have borne the Chriſtian name. So indeed the ſcriptures inform us: They that obtain the victory with Chriſt are *called, and choſen, and faithful.**

The manner in which things, of late ages, have moved on in the religious world has been ſuch as to admit of a large outer-court, if I may ſo ſpeak, for a ſort of half-worſhippers. A general religious reputation has been hitherto obtained at a ſmall expenſe. But ſhould infidelity prevail throughout Chriſtendom, as it has in France, the nominal extent of the Chriſtian Church will be greatly reduced. In taking its dimenſions, the outer-court will, as it were, be left out, and given to the Gentiles. In this caſe, you muſt come in, or keep out; be one thing, or another; a decided friend of Chriſt, or an avowed infidel. It is poſſible that the time may come,

* Rev. xvii. 14.

when all parties will be reduced, in effect, to two, *believers and unbelievers.*

"Never," ſays a late maſterly and moving writer, "were times more eventful and "critical," than at preſent; "never were appearances more ſingular and intereſting, "in the political, or in the religious world. "You behold, on the one hand, infidelity, "with dreadful irruption, extending its ravages far and wide; and on the other, an "amazing acceſſion of zeal and activity to "the cauſe of Chriſtianity. Error, in all its "forms, is aſſiduouſly and ſucceſsfully propagated; but the progreſs of evangelical "truth is alſo great. The number of the apparently neutral party daily diminiſhes; "and men are now either becoming worſhippers of the God and Father of our Lord "Jeſus Chriſt, or receding faſt through the "miſts of ſcepticiſm into the dreary regions "of ſpeculative and practical atheiſm.—It "ſeems as if Chriſtianity and infidelity were "muſtering each the hoſt of the battle, and "preparing for ſome great day of God. The "enemy is come in like a flood: But the "ſpirit of the Lord hath lifted up a ſtandard againſt him. Who, then is on the "Lord's ſide? Who?—Let him come forth "to the help of the Lord, to the help of the "Lord againſt the mighty!"*

Secondly, *Let a good underſtanding be cultivated among ſincere Chriſtians of different de-*

* *Ferrier's Two Diſcourſes* at Paiſley in June, 1798.

nominations. Let the friends of Chriſt know one another; and let not ſlighter ſhades of difference keep them at variance. The enemies of Chriſtianity know how to avail themſelves of our diſcords. The union which is here recommended, however, is not a merely nominal one, much leſs one that requires a ſacrifice of principle. Let us unite ſo far as we can act in concert, in promoting the intereſt of Chriſt; and hold ourſelves open to conviction with regard to other things.—Let not the free diſcuſſion of our differences be laid aſide, or any ſuch connexion formed as ſhall require it; only let them be conducted with modeſty, frankneſs, and candor, and the godly will find their account in them. Let it be the great concern of all, not ſo much to maintain their own peculiarities, as to know and practiſe the truth: not ſo much to yield, and come nearer to other denominations, as to approximate towards the mind of Chriſt. *The mind of Chriſt,* as expreſſed in his doctrines and precepts, muſt be the central point in which we meet: as we approach this, we ſhall come nearer to each other. So much agreement as there is amongſt us, ſo much is there of union; and ſo much agreement as there is in the mind of Chriſt, ſo much of Chriſtian union.

Finally, *Let not the heart of any man fail him, on account of the high tone and ſcornful airs aſſumed by infidels.* The reign of infidelity may be extenſive, but it muſt be ſhort. It carries in it the ſeeds of its own diſſolu-

tion. Its immoralities are ſuch, that the world cannot long ſuſtain them. Scripture prophecy has clearly foretold all the great governments of the world, from the time of the Jewiſh Captivity to this day: the Babylonian, Perſian, Macedonian, and Roman; together with the ten kingdoms into which the laſt of theſe empires has been divided, and the Papal government which ſprang up from amongſt them; but it makes no explicit mention of this. It has no individual ſubſiſtence given it in the ſyſtem of prophecy. It is not a *beaſt*; but a mere putrid excreſcence of the Papal beaſt; an excreſcence which, though it may diffuſe death through every vein of the body on which it grew, yet it ſhall die along with it. *The beaſt*, and all which pertains to him *goeth into perdition.**—There is no ſpace of time allowed for this government: no ſooner it is ſaid, *Babylon is fallen*, than voices are heard in heaven declaring that *the marriage of the Lamb is come.*† No ſooner does *the judgment ſit, to take away the dominion of the little horn, to conſume and to deſtroy it unto the end*, than it follows, *And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatneſs of the kingdom under the whole heaven ſhall be given to the people of the ſaints of the Moſt High.*‡

* Rev. xvii. 8. 11. † Rev. xviii. xix.

‡ Dan. vii. 26, 27. The writer has ſince read a very able diſcourſe by Mr. Nathan Strong, of Hartford, Connecticut, entitled, *Political Inſtruction from the Prophecies of God's Word;* in which the above ſentiments are ſtated with great force of evidence.

Popery is not yet deſtroyed though it has received a deadly blow; and from what is ſaid of the little horn, that they ſhall take away his dominion *to conſume, and to deſtroy it unto the end*, it ſhould ſeem that its overthrow will be gradual. While this is accompliſhing, the reign of infidelity may continue, with various ſucceſs; but no longer. Only let us *watch, and keep our garments clean*, a caution given, it is probable, with immediate reference to the preſent times,* and we have nothing to fear. It is a ſource of great conſolation that the laſt of the four Beaſts, which, for more than two thouſand years, have perſecuted the church, and oppreſſed mankind, is drawing near to its end. The government that ſhall next prevail will be that of Chriſt, *whoſe kingdom is an everlaſting kingdom, and all dominions ſhall ſerve and obey him. Even ſo amen. Bleſſed be his glorious name for ever; and let the whole earth be filled with his glory; amen, and amen!*

* Rev. xvi. 15.

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